

FOR AIR



THE INDEPENDENT

2.97

WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 1996 40p (1R 45p)

Another royal family crisis
Japan and the princess problem

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Derek Lewis, an exclusive interview

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A-level exams will be made harder to pass

Non-science subjects 'too easy'

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Sixth formers will face tougher A-level exams in all subjects except maths and science under proposals put forward in a fundamental review of the exam to be published later this month.

Exam boards say it will be the first change in A-level standards since the exam was introduced more than 40 years ago.

Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education, is understood to have accepted the controversial plan put forward by Sir Ron Dearing, the Government's chief adviser on exams. Critics of A-level say it is already too difficult and that the drop-out and failure rates are too high.

Mrs Shephard asked Sir Ron to look at the standards of A-levels in different subjects after research revealed that it was much harder to score a top grade in maths and physics than in English and business studies. Pupils taking sciences might score as much as a grade lower than pupils of similar ability taking some arts subjects.

Sir Ron says in his report that the differences are unacceptable and that marking of "easier" subjects must be toughened to match that in the harder ones.

Ministers say more pupils must be persuaded to take science at A-level in the interests of economic prosperity. Teachers believe pupils are put off science because they think it is "difficult".

Research has shown that maths, physics and chemistry are the most difficult subjects with German, French, history, biology and economics not far behind. Geography, classics and Spanish are of average difficulty and English, business studies, home economics, design and technology are the easiest.

The report proposes that the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, which Sir Ron heads, should have new powers to compel the exam boards to review the difficulty of all A-level exams. The authority's officials would also have power to check that A-level papers were being marked more strictly.

Changes will not be put into place for at least three years. So the first students to be affected will be those beginning A-level courses in September next year.

Sir Ron believes it would be unfair to introduce changes for students who have already chosen their A-level subjects.

His proposals are part of a package of measures which include the introduction of a new intermediate exam after one year in the sixth form to encourage students to take more subjects.

He is also recommending a national certificate which would include both A-levels and vocational qualifications as a way of promoting parity of esteem between the two.

Sir Ron's decision on A-level marking will please traditionalists who fear that efforts to bring the exam closer to

vocational qualifications will dilute standards.

John Dunford, president of the Secondary Heads' Association, said 15 per cent of pupils already dropped out of A-level courses and a further 15 per cent failed.

"That is a national scandal and this will make it worse. There is still a lot of pressure from parents for people to do A-level when they should be doing other courses."

However, Mr Dunford hopes that some less able pupils might be encouraged to take the new one-year exams being proposed by Sir Ron. "Then some of the problems about A-level being too difficult might be overcome," he said.

Graham Able, head of fee-paying Hampton School in London, said he welcomed Sir Ron's plan.

A survey of academic schools belonging to the Headmasters' Conference of top public schools showed that they wanted other subjects brought up to the same standard as A-level rather than vice versa.

"We feel there should be comparability between all subjects," Mr Able said.

George Turnbull, of the Associated Examining Board, said: "This will change A-level standards which have not altered since the exam started. The standards we apply in all subjects have been inherited and have been maintained."

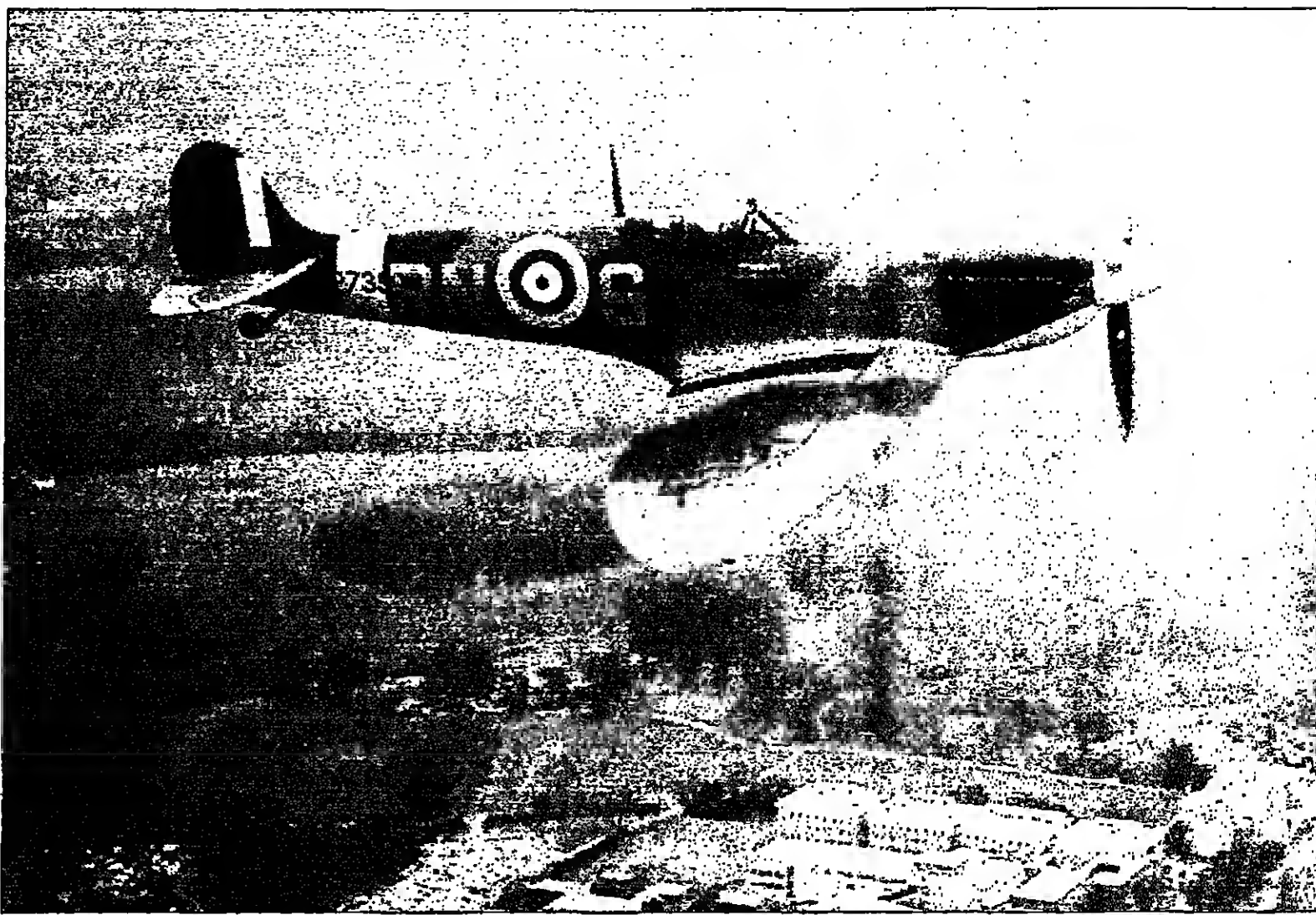
"How do you judge English literature against physics? This will have a knock-on effect in universities and the standard of degrees."

Sir Ron tried to discover whether A-level standards have changed over time but was unable to uncover enough evidence to come to a conclusion.

He is also overseeing another study to determine whether modular A-levels are easier than traditional ones.

Falling to add up, page 4

Old fighters never die, they just soar away



Birthday flight: A Spitfire took to the skies over Southampton yesterday in a salute to the fighter's maiden sortie 60 years ago. After a commemorative service in the city, hundreds of spectators saw the Spitfire do a victory roll before dipping its wings in a farewell salute

Photograph: Roy Riley

Furious Tories threaten fish war

COLIN BROWN
and KATHERINE BUTLER
Brussels

Furious Conservative MPs were demanding gunboat diplomacy to protect British fishing rights after the European Court of Justice ruled that Spanish trawler owners could sue Britain for up to £30m, in compensation for banning them from UK waters.

Tony Baldry, the fisheries minister, who was in Brussels, denounced the ruling as "quite crazy". But that did nothing to quell Tory Euro-sceptic MPs, including former ministers, who threatened a full-scale Commons revolt within two weeks and a fresh Government defeat.

The Government failed to defuse the row with its backbenchers, after warning that it would seek changes to the Common Fisheries Policy at the Inter-governmental conference (IGC), beginning on 29 March in Turin. In order to stop "quota hopping", which allows Spanish fishermen to buy up British quotas and ship the catches back to Spain.

The row with the Tory backbench threatens to reopen old wounds over Europe, wrecking John Major's hopes of uniting his party behind a white paper on the IGC to be published next Monday.

The Opposition, Tory rebels and Ulster Unionists are expected to vote against the white paper in the Commons, threatening a rerun of the Government defeat by two votes on the fishing issue on 19 December.

Tory Euro-sceptic MPs said Britain should follow the example of Iceland, which won protection for its waters in the "cod war" with gun boats.

John Redwood, the former cabinet minister, said Britain should be prepared to take unilateral action to protect its fishing industry.

Ian Duncan-Smith, another leading Tory Euro-sceptic, called for the use of patrol boats to enforce a fishing exclusion zone to EU trawlers in British waters. "Many of us are absolutely furious about this," he said.

The Common Fisheries Policy has not worked for conservation. It has been a disaster. The only way ahead is for national control, which will need patrolling," he said.

The Tory anger spilled over in Prime Minister's Questions, which in Mr Major's absence was taken by Michael Heseltine. Mr Major is certain to face more demands tomorrow for robust action at the IGC. Moderate Tory MPs, including David Harris, MP for St Ives, who has been working with ministers, were sceptical that the Government's action would work.

"It is not going to be easy. I cannot imagine Spain giving up now," he said.

The Prime Minister ordered concerted policy proposals to be drawn up by his Downing Street

policy unit and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, following demands for action by Mr Harris after last year's vote.

Britain will be seeking to change the fishing rules to ensure Spanish trawlers offload their catches at British ports, and sell their fish in the British market, thus making British quotas potentially less attractive.

The White Paper is said to contain the proposal that where the Luxembourg court finds a member state has failed to

TURN TO PAGE TWO

Blunders hitting care of sick children

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A damning report on the death of a ten-year-old boy who was ferried between four hospitals in search of treatment, has revealed a shortage of specialist beds and organisational blunders which are threatening the care of very sick children.

The official report was published on the same day as it emerged that the liver of ecstasy victim Leah Betts had to be given to a patient in Spain because no British hospital could accept it: two transplant centres said this was because they had no intensive care (IC) beds.

The incidents have fuelled fears of a mounting crisis in emergency care in the NHS

which peaked this winter, when scores of adults and children had to be refused admission to IC units.

The Government, under intense pressure, has been forced to act and today Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, will unveil a wide-ranging package of proposals to offset a crisis.

The case of Nicholas Geldard, 10, came to national attention after he collapsed at home in Stockport on the afternoon of 7 December. A report of the independent inquiry team, chaired by Judge Bill Ashworth, found that four children's hospitals with IC beds in Liverpool, Manchester, and Sheffield, had to refuse to take the boy. Their report calls for



the urgent re-organisation of intensive care for children in the North West with brain damage or neurological problems. In a strongly worded conclusion it says: "The time for talk and discussion ... is over. The need

The case of Nicholas Geldard (left) reveals a curious mix of praiseworthy commitment; idiosyncratic call-out arrangements; ghastly misjudgement; insensitivity ... and a ponderous bureaucracy

now is for the proposals in our recommendations to be put into effect as rapidly as possible. This needs firm and resolute leadership. We must put the children first."

According to the report, the

case of Nicholas Geldard reveals "a curious mix of praiseworthy staff commitment; idiosyncratic call-out arrangements, ghastly misjudgement and insensitivity in sending Nicholas to Leeds General Infirmary ... after he was brain dead, and a ponderous bureaucracy that bedevils clinicians seeking paediatric neurological and neurosurgical advice and treatment."

Nicholas was first admitted to Stockport Infirmary's casualty department and was referred to nearby Stepping Hill Hospital for further investigation. However, the brain scanner which would have diagnosed his condition was not available out-of-hours. The on-call consultant radiologist at the hospital was

not contacted. The "make-shift" on-call system at Stepping Hill was criticised in the report as being "bound to fail. The only surprise is that it took nearly two years to do so."

It wasn't until eight hours after Nicholas collapsed that a doctor found an IC bed at Leeds General Infirmary, about 60 miles away, by which time the boy was probably brain dead, according to the report. In the meantime he had been taken to Hope Hospital in Manchester for a brain scan.

The inquiry team said that it was "only chance" that Nicholas's death was not directly the result of the blunders. He suffered bleeding into the brain which is extremely rare in children under 15.

IN BRIEF

Israelis defiant

Israel has rejected a truce offer by Hamas after Monday's suicide bombing in Tel Aviv and tightened its curbs on Palestinians.

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Hope for al-Masari

A judge yesterday disrupted the government's plan to deport the Saudi dissident Muhammad al-Masari.

Page 2

Today's weather

Cloudy and cool in south-eastern areas. Dry and sunny elsewhere.

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Michelangelo and the art computer havoc

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

Before you turn your PC on today, consider a couple of facts: today would be the 521st birthday of Michelangelo, the Renaissance painter, and it is the fifth birthday of Michelangelo, the computer virus that wreaks havoc with hard discs.

If your computer is "infected" with the Michelangelo virus, the hard disc will be wiped clean when you turn it on

today. Anyone with an IBM-compatible PC may be at risk, including those running Microsoft's newer operating system, Windows 95.

Users of Apple's Macintosh range are safe, however, as they cannot run programs, or viruses, which were written for IBM machines.

Companies which specialise in anti-virus products and in recovering data from "wiped" computers, are bracing themselves for a flood of calls.

"Our US office got 10 times the daily average of calls in the days before and after 6 March last year," said Caroline Kuipers, international marketing co-ordinator for McAfee, based in Bracknell. "Some were victims of the virus, and some were concerned customers."

The virus first came to notice in 1991, when an estimated 5 million computers were affected worldwide. It spreads between computers by secretly putting a copy of itself onto any

floppy disc inserted into the machine. It then lurks in the PC's memory, waiting for the correct date before it triggers itself, with catastrophic results.

Computer viruses are a growing problem, especially for companies whose computers are linked over a network, which allows viruses to spread more easily. They can be downloaded also from the Internet. Market research suggests in 1994 viruses cost British businesses £128m in lost time and revenue.

Alan Solomon, head of S&S International, specialising in anti-virus products, said: "If it's on your computer, it will trigger when you turn it on today."

"The only way to know would be to have run an anti-virus test previously."



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WORLD
of
**OLIVER
&
CLAIRE**

CORRECTION!
THE WORLD OF
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news

Judge tells Howard to reconsider Masari case

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

A judge yesterday disrupted the Government's "arms for bananas" deals, which would have seen an outspoken Saudi dissident and asylum seeker deported to Dominica.

In a damning criticism of ministers' handling of the case of Muhammad al-Masari, the Home Secretary Michael Howard was ordered to reconsider the Islamic fundamentalist's claim for asylum. It was the latest in a series of embarrass-

ing court rebukes for the Home Secretary.

Judge David Pearl, the chief immigration adjudicator sitting at the Immigration Appellate Authority in north London, accused ministers of an "unprecedented attempt to circumvent for diplomatic and trade reasons" its obligations under the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees. And he questioned whether its actions were "within the humanitarian spirit in which the convention and asylum legislation should be interpreted".

He ruled that the only way to ensure the "highest standards of fairness" to Dr Masari and in the public interest was for Mr Howard to consider his asylum claim in full - within a month.

The Government had been hoping to send Dr Masari to the Caribbean, thus protecting at least £20bn of arms deals - apparently under threat because the Saudi government does not believe the United Kingdom should give refuge to one of its most vociferous opponents.

Dominica, an independent territory, had agreed to take the

49-year-old as a refugee - the country's first - after they were told by government officials "one good deal deserves another". According to Eddison James, the Prime Minister of Dominica, an increase in aid from the UK to the island and a guaranteed trade in its cash crop, bananas, were at issue.

But yesterday Judge Pearl thwarted the arrangement by upholding Dr Masari's claim that Dominica could not be regarded as a safe haven. He said the history of Dominica illustrated "political vulnerability,

such that pressure placed on it to expel him to Saudi Arabia may not be capable of being resisted".

During the three-day hearing Dr Masari described being beaten and tortured after being thrown into prison for helping to found an Islamic fundamentalist political party in Saudi Arabia. He said he remained at risk of reprisals.

Last night the Home Office said Mr Howard was considering an appeal. But this is the second time that the Home

Secretary has been requested by an adjudicator to properly consider Dr Masari's claim - indicating that an appeal may fail. His apparent decision to ignore that first ruling last year is already the subject of a judicial review.

A jubilant Dr Masari said the ruling gave him a better chance of staying in Britain while George Galloway, the Labour MP and organiser of the Masari Must Stay campaign, said the judgement was "a grave condemnation of the Major government".

Dr Masari: Ruling gives him hope of staying in UK

Rifkind warns EU on foreign policy role

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

Britain wants the European Union to stay out of sensitive foreign policy decisions, Malcolm Rifkind, said yesterday in Paris, but is prepared to let it expand its role.

Less than a month before the opening of the crucial Inter-Governmental Conference on European institutions in Turin, the Foreign Secretary has signalled how far Britain is prepared to accommodate the demands of France and Germany for a common European foreign and security policy, while preserving intact the needs of national sovereignty.

His comments show that the Government will carve out a tough position, but has left itself plenty of negotiating room. In an upbeat speech that defended Europe's record on foreign and defence co-ordination, particularly in former Yugoslavia, Mr Rifkind set out detailed proposals and principles. These included the possibility of naming someone to give European policy what he called "a clearer voice" in the world.

"Like France," he said, "Britain sees possible attractions in appointing a single figure to represent the foreign policy of the Union." But he went on to qualify this by saying that this person should be subordinate to national capitals. He or she should be "somebody appointed and tasked by the Council of Ministers: its servant, not its chairman", he said.

He later said this did not rule out someone who would also contribute to policy-making but, he stressed, that person should be a "co-ordinator or spokesman" for a policy determined between governments, like the UN Secretary General.

France has consistently argued for someone who would be a "Mr Europe" for the outside world, but has conceived of the position as having executive responsibility rather than the

"servant" role Mr Rifkind stipulated.

Rejecting the repeated calls from Germany and others for majority voting on foreign and defence issues in Europe, Mr Rifkind welcomed the recent Franco-German suggestion for "constructive abstention", if only as "implicit recognition" that some alternative to qualified majority voting had to be considered. Constructive abstention is the idea that an individual member state would have the right to dissent from a policy, but not to block it.

But Mr Rifkind warned that such a principle - implying that countries which did not specifically vote for a policy agreed to give it their moral and possibly material support - would not solve real disagreements. It could have applied to Germany over Bosnia, but "would France have been willing to abstain constructively over nuclear testing?"

Mr Rifkind's other major proposal was for closer co-ordination of the EU and the Western European Union, the defence body which has links to Nato. The WEU should not become part of the EU, he underlined. Better co-ordination, Mr Rifkind said, would enable "unity of EU action to serve EU political objectives" and he recommended specifically co-ordinating the EU's political and economic activities "more effectively with the military instruments available to the WEU - giving the EU a military capability for the first time, though at arms length."

However, he argued against the WEU becoming the defence wing of the EU, largely because the two organisations are based on separate treaties and membership. The neutral countries, he noted, had only observer status in the WEU; this enabled them to take part in peace-keeping and humanitarian work, but they did not share the higher obligations that came with Nato and WEU membership.

Fraud inquiry over nuclear arms depot

The Government has launched a fraud inquiry into a £50m overspend during the building of the massive nuclear weapons depot for Trident submarines at Coulport on the Clyde, writes Chris Blackhurst.

Officers from the Ministry of Defence police have seized documents from Tarmac, the main contractor on the project to build a new jetty access road and handling area, which saw its cost spiral from £61m to £115m.

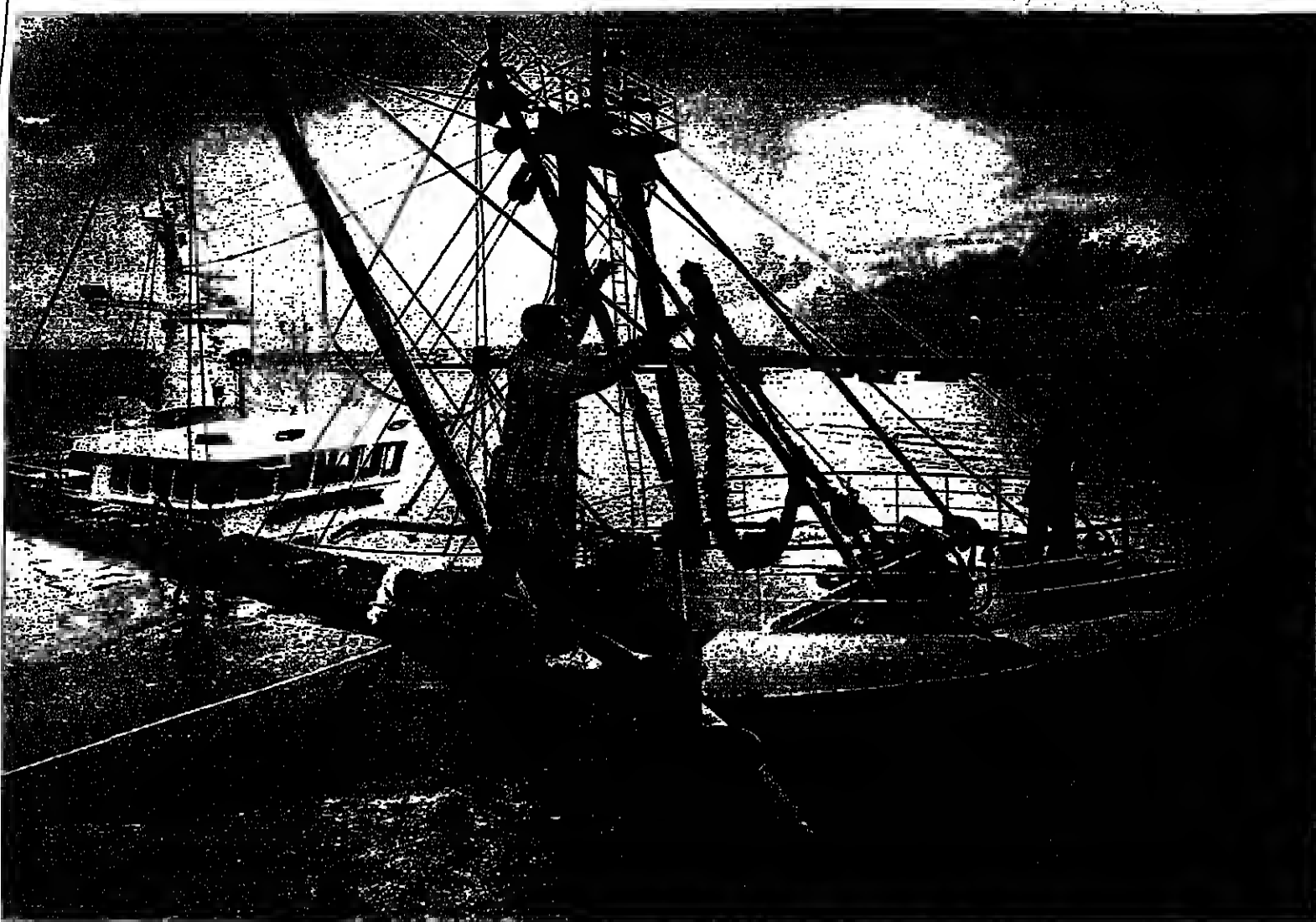
A report from the National Audit Office, the public spending watchdog, was heavily critical of the MoD and the Property Services Agency for the administration of the con-

tract. Tarmac was subsequently handed the PSA free of charge in a controversial privatisation in 1992.

The NAO report commented that the PSA and MoD were unable to obtain "proper assurance" about the validity of Tarmac's claimed costs. "An independent audit commissioned by PSA found that the nominated quantity surveyor had spot checked labour costs on only some 3 per cent of the contractor's submissions."

Last Thursday, the MoD police raided Tarmac offices. Tarmac said it was surprised by the raids but said it would co-operate with any investigation.

Fish war: Verdict from Luxembourg fans flames of Euro-sceptic resentment



Net loss: Fishermen in Brixham, Devon, where news of compensation payments to Spanish fleets was badly received. Photograph: Jim Cuff

Judgment highlights British MPs face unpalatable truth

KATHERINE BUTLER
Brussels

The European Court of Justice, which sits in Luxembourg, is sometimes described as the quiet man of the European institutions. But when it speaks - as in yesterday's ruling clearing the way for Spanish fishermen to sue Britain for up to £30m - it can shake the member states to their foundations and offer an unpalatable reminder of the supremacy of EU law.

Comprised of 15 judges, one from each member state, and nine advocates general, the role of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) is to ensure that EU law is both interpreted and implemented in line with the EU treaties. It is the only body with the power to give an opinion on how the treaties or other EU legislative acts should be interpreted, when requested by a national court.

Litigation which ends up in the Luxembourg chamber almost always begins in the na-

tional courts. Local judges deal with the initial proceedings but may decide there are issues of European law to be clarified or elaborated on: they will then refer cases to the ECJ. As in yesterday's ruling, it is the national court which has the final say, based of course on the interpretation handed down by Luxembourg.

In Britain, the mere mention of European rulings or courts can be enough to trigger sceptical rage. That is partly because people often fail to make the distinction between the ECJ which is the European Union's highest legal tribunal, and the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights, which operates under the aegis of the much older 48-nation Council of Europe.

The Strasbourg court interprets and oversees domestic implementation only of the European Convention on Human Rights. The reaction in Britain was furious when that court last year condemned Britain for the SAS killings of three IRA

members in Gibraltar. Even members of the Government accused Europe of interfering in the UK's sovereign right to fight terrorism and warned that the ruling would be ignored.

To some extent, the Luxembourg court, although entirely unrelated, gets tarred with the same brush. High-profile cases may have given the impression that Britain takes the rap more often than most in the EU court, but the reality is that the UK is regarded as one of the best observers of the rules and their implementation.

Britain is widely expected to push for at least some watering down of the ECJ's powers when the EU treaties come up for revision in the Intergovernmental Conference to be launched in Turin later this month.

Luxembourg lawyers warn, however, that it might not be in Britain's interest to seek reforms that could weaken the court and leave the door open to exploitation by countries less diligent about observing the rules.

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Political Correspondent

The British Government has long insisted that breaches of European law by others should be rigorously punished and punished. The unpalatable "truth" yesterday for ministers, Tory Eurosceptics - and indeed MPs of all political hues - was that this principle is as likely to work against Britain as for it.

Amidst the pledges from a ruffled Government that yesterday's ruling will be raised at the forthcoming Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC), little attention was given to the wider impact of the ruling - which establishes the direct right of individuals to sue EU member states for compensation over what the Luxembourg court called "sufficiently serious" breaches of European law.

It will be equally open to British citizens and businesses to sue other states who break the law.

The European Commission yesterday highlighted an example from 1994 when a UK company failed to secure Span-

ish authorisation to establish a shipping line between Spain and Morocco - until the European Commission began a legal action against Spain.

Two separate claims were involved in yesterday's ruling: unlawful British shipping registration rules under the 1988 Merchant Shipping Act aimed at curbing Spanish fishermen registering vessels in the UK so securing a significant slice of the fishing quotas, and an unlawful ban on exports of French beer to Germany.

Whether, and what, compensation should be paid is a matter for national courts. And it is still open to Britain or any other state to set conditions for vessel registration provided they are objective and do not pick and choose on grounds of nationality.

The law can cut both ways. But all three British political parties were united in their condemnation of yesterday's ruling, raising expectations that the Government will push strongly for changes to the court at the IGC.

Tories threaten fish war over 'crazy' ruling

FROM PAGE ONE

uphold EU law, but has done so in good faith then it should not be liable for damages.

The Government is also seeking long-term reform of the European Court, to prevent it from imposing retrospective compensation rulings.

The Luxembourg-based court ruled that individuals

have a right to sue for compensation for breaches of, or failures to enact, Community law, even where member states legislatures were responsible.

For the first time it set down the guidelines which determine when individuals' claims for damages should succeed.

The Spanish fishermen must now pursue their claims in the British courts. But the implica-

tion to be drawn from the European Court's reasoning is that they are entitled to the money.

The level of damages has also been left to the national courts to set, but they must be "commensurate with the loss, or damage, suffered", the judges said.

The Government will attempt to amend fundamental

European Union treaties in order to end the practice of foreign-owned and crewed boats taking Britain's fish quotas.

Mr Baldry said: "It does seem crazy that a Spanish owned, skippered and captained vessel taking its catch back to Spain can fish off our UK quota."

"These are UK fish for UK fishermen."

Mr Baldry said he did not see how any government, including the Spanish government, could justify the current practice.

"All of us are inherently reasonable," he added.

Elizabeth Stevenson, secretary of the Cornish Fish Producers Association, said: "We feel very strongly about this because these Spanish boats pose a serious problem for us."

IN BRIEF

Five arrested in £15m drugs raid

Five people were being questioned by police last night after a raid on an illegal drug factory with the capacity to produce £15m worth of amphetamine sulphate, or speed, every week. Two separate laboratories were found at an isolated farm in Newton Flotman, near Norfolk - one to manufacture the drug's chemical ingredients and a second to make the drug itself. A spokesman for Scotland Yard said the equipment at the farm was capable of producing 600 kilos of pure amphetamine sulphate per week.

Four men and a woman, aged in their 40s and 50s, were arrested after police surrounded the farm early yesterday morning.

Gold Cup theft bid

Thieves tried to steal the Cheltenham Gold Cup by smashing a bathroom through the window of the jeweller's shop where the trophy is on display before next week's horse racing festival. The window remained intact and the two men drove off empty-handed in a car stolen in London and later found abandoned.

Pupil power

Ardingly College, a 500-pupil independent boarding school at Haywards Heath, Sussex, has placed a £1m order with Olivetti to supply all pupils and staff with notebook computers. Head teacher James Flecker said: "They enable pupils to take a greater responsibility for their learning."

Children's TV move

Children's television presenter and Peters is to leave the BBC for a £500,000 contract with the BBC since 1989. He is the Saturday morning "Live 'n' Kicking" and the Q-Zone magazine programme. He leaves in April to join London Weekend Television.

Advertisement rap

A claim in a Eurotunnel advertisement that Le Shuttle was the most popular way to cross the Channel was untrue, the Advertising Standards Authority rules today. P&O European Ferries lodged an objection, pointing out that they had carried 1.4m cars compared to 1m on the Shuttle.

DNA test ruling

A mother and her son, conceived during an adulterous affair, must have DNA tests to prove who is the baby's genetic father. The woman's husband, who has had a vasectomy, says he does not wish to know who is the biological father, but two appeal judges ruled that the mother's former lover was entitled to know the truth.

Schoolboy suicide

A schoolboy killed himself after being accused of trying to steal a car badge. Andrew Smith, 12, was found hanging by his tie from a hunk bed at his home in Seaham, County Durham. Detective Inspector Tim Wilson said: "There are no suspicious circumstances but it is a tragedy for his parents."

MoD admits blame

The Ministry of Defence admitted liability seven years after a young serviceman died in a parachute accident. Solicitors have begun negotiations for a settlement. Royal Marine Simon Ferrante, 21, died in August 1989 after twice hitting his head in drops at RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire.

Three die in crash

Three people died in a crash involving a school minibus and a car on the A472 between Pontypool and Crumlin, Gwent. All the occupants of a red Peugeot were killed when it was in collision with the empty 21-seater vehicle on its way to collect children coming home from a local school.

Marksman accused

Committal proceedings began against a Scotland Yard marksman accused of shooting a suspected car thief dead. PC Patrick Hodgson, 49, is the first British policeman to be charged with murder while on duty. David Ewin died a fortnight after he was shot twice while driving a car last February.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Benefit crooks to get amnesty

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Benefit fraudsters are to be offered a two-week amnesty from prosecution in a new attempt to cut the estimated £2.5bn-a-year fraud bill.

The move was announced by Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security, as part of a series of month-long anti-fraud drives in big cities to be launched in coming months.

The crackdowns will be preceded by two weeks of local publicity, he said yesterday in a Commons debate. The aim is "to give people who have just drifted into abusing the bene-

fit system the chance to put their claim right and to catch those who choose not to do so."

A spokesman for his department said the plan did not involve an amnesty on back-payment of benefit if individuals were found to have been claiming fraudulently.

But an admission of fraudulent claims in the two-week period would be "taken into account" in deciding whether to prosecute.

The anti-fraud drives will include freephone hotlines for reporting suspected fraud; local data-matching exercises; increased visits to claimants; introduction of barcode scanners

in post offices to detect stolen order books and unspecified "special drives" on employers and self-employed who, Mr Lilley said, are "likely to be involved in benefit fraud".

He also began to answer criticism from housing-benefit fraud-investigation officers that the present system is aimed at detecting rather than preventing fraud, to the point where councils are encouraged to allow some fraud in order to detect it and claim incentive payments.

Revised financial incentives will be introduced, Mr Lilley said, and a pilot scheme aimed at catching organised fraud of

housing benefit is to be launched in London. A study aimed at improving the Benefits Agency's much-criticised liaison with local authorities is also to be undertaken, while 1,100 Employment Service staff are to transfer to the agency from 1 April before the new, tougher, Job Seekers Allowance, which replaces unemployment benefit this year.

Chris Smith, Labour's social-security spokesman, said Mr Lilley should end the "finders-keepers" rule which encourages the Benefits Agency and councils to compete with each other rather than co-operate in chasing the same fraudsters.

دكتور من الأهل

MoD gets rocket over lost works of art

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Works of art have been leaving the Ministry of Defence buildings by the lorryload, and nobody seems to know where they have been going, according to an official report published today.

Ministry staff have been able to locate just 15 out of 205 valuable pictures that have been missing for a number of years from the walls of military barracks, officers' messes, and office buildings. One of the missing prints was taken from the ministry flat of the then Secretary of State, Tom King, in 1991 and has never been re-

covered. Of the MoD's inventory of 900 works of art, says the study from the National Audit Office, the public finance watchdog, 190 are missing. Twenty-three pictures have been stolen over the years but the MoD police have not got anywhere with their inquiries.

This latest example of MoD mismanagement will inevitably provoke another flurry of awkward questions when officials go before the influential Commons Public Accounts Select Committee to explain themselves. The study identifies a wholesale disregard by the ministry towards its precious art portfolio. In one case high-

lighted by the NAO, four former Territorial officers put a painting, *Richmond Hill in the Summer of 1862* by Jasper Francis Cropsey, up for sale through Bonhams, the London auctioneers. It was valued at £400,000 but just before it went for auction, their commanding officer stepped in and contacted solicitors to block the sale.

Under auction rules, the auctioneer has the right to claim 20 per cent of the reserve if the work is withdrawn, so Bonhams has invoiced the officers for £80,000. Meanwhile the painting has been returned to the regiment.

Pictures appear to have

walked from the premises with nobody having any inkling as to their whereabouts. A portrait on loan from the National Army Museum, *An Officer of the 28th Foot*, artist unknown, disappeared when the Quartermaster General's offices were relocated from London to Andover in 1992. MoD police did not investigate the loss until 1994 and are still looking for it.

In 1991, the ministry listed as missing a fine print, *View of the Boardroom of the Admiralty* by Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Charles Pugin. It had actually been hanging on the wall of the Admiralty boardroom in Whitehall, London. Investiga-

tions have proved fruitless. Some of the most heavily guarded buildings in the land, which require security passes to enter and are constantly manned, have lost paintings. Northumberland House, one of the most tightly controlled ministry buildings in London, has had two thefts involving 16 lithographs and pencil sketches.

MoD police interviewed all the staff, plus contractors and searched the offices from top to bottom but the lithographs have never been recovered.

Officers' houses, which have already aroused political controversy for their sumptuous decor, have also benefited from

the ministry's largesse with its art collection. Ten prints were transferred without government consent to Hill Top House, Korbbecke, in Germany, an official staff residence. Five prints have gone missing and the Government's curators are now looking at interior photographs of Hill Top - which has since been sold - to see if they were left behind on the walls.

Equally worrying is that the ministry is failing to maintain pictures properly. The NAO found 18 cases of damage to paintings and frames where the authorities had not been notified. Some works had been damaged during office redeco-

ration and others had been cleaned by office cleaners.

Over 100 paintings were found to be at risk by the NAO, either because they were hung where they ran the risk of damage or were not hung securely.

The NAO recommended better record-keeping - the ministry has no central record of works of art belonging to former units - and improved management and care for the paintings.

David Clark, Labour's defence spokesman said: "If MoD ministers can't even manage its art collection, how can we expect them to manage our defences." He promised to raise the matter in Parliament.

18 horses killed in 'arson attack' at farm

The owners of a farm where 18 horses died in an early morning blaze yesterday were "sickened" last night after discovering that the tragedy was probably the result of an arson attack.

A burnt-out car was found in the debris of the livery stables at the farm in Shadoxhurst, near Ashford, Kent. At least 12 other horses were saved, but four had to be treated by a vet for burns.

The cost of damage caused by the fire is estimated at £100,000. The farm has been run by Brian and Nan Fraser for just over five years, but it has been in Mr Fraser's family for more than 50 years.

His mother Nora, who lives nearby, said: "I can't believe anyone could do something as terrible as this. The fire totally destroyed the farm buildings. You can't help thinking of all those poor animals in the building. It's sickening."

Mr Fraser's brother, Tony, said a car had been driven through a fence and then into a barn where it was set on fire. He said the animals did not have a chance: "It is an horrific and disgusting thing to do. It appears to have been a deliberate attack, but I have no idea who could do such a thing or why."

The fire was discovered early yesterday and Kent Police confirmed that a burnt-out car was found. Detective Inspector Gerald Smith said: "You can imagine the grief and misery that has been caused by this appalling tragedy to each and every owner. Obviously we are treating this as suspicious."

John Painter, 48, of Shadoxhurst, whose wife, Julie, 38, kept a horse at the stables was shocked by news of the blaze. Mrs Painter's horse, Byuk, an Arabian gelding, survived, but Mr Painter said: "It is a very friendly operation - a sort of do-it-yourself livery stables."

Owners buy their own feed and straw and the horses are looked after and bedded down in the barns. This is a tragedy for Brian and Nan and very upsetting for everyone concerned.

A spokesman for Kent fire service said: "The cause of the fire is being looked into by our investigation team."

The toll of birds killed in oil disaster mounts as scientists find two new species of Britain's most common bat

'Sea Empress' spill claims 25,000 birds

PETER VICTOR

More than 25,000 sea birds may have been killed by the disastrous oil spill from the *Sea Empress* tanker, the RSPCA said yesterday.

Latest casualty figures show that just under 2,500 carcasses have been collected along the South Wales coastline. But wildlife experts say reliable scientific data indicates that only one dead bird in ten is recovered. "There is no doubt whatsoever that many more birds are dying out at sea," Richard Timothy, an RSPCA spokesman, said. "When the current calm

weather breaks, we expect an increase in the numbers of oiled birds being driven ashore."

Conservation organisations and volunteers are now caring for more than 3,000 oiled survivors at RSPCA bird hospitals.

A special unit with a dozen small pools is opening at Milford Haven, south-west Wales, where RSPCA inspectors will be able to test the buoyancy and fitness of birds before releasing them back into the wild.

Diving teams were yesterday assessing damage to the ruptured tanks of the 147,000 tonne *Sea Empress*, now empty and berthed at the port after spilling more than half its cargo of oil into the sea when it ran aground. Updated figures yesterday showed that more than 72,000 tonnes of oil from an original cargo of 130,824 tonnes had spewed into the sea.

Marine engineers with the Anglo-Dutch salvage crew are making preparations to sail or tow the giant disabled vessel to a repair yard, possibly in Belfast or northern France.

Landing craft specialists from the Royal Marines are to help in the massive clear-up operation, which is expected to take two weeks. Men and equipment from the Royal Marines Landing Craft Wing at Poole, Dorset, have been drafted in to transport equipment to beaches and coves inaccessible by road.

Species death toll

Marx Shearwater	1
Fulmar	2
Great northern diver	2
Black-throated	2
Red-throated diver	20
Great crested grebe	2
Gannet	2
Shag	2
Cormorant	34
Shearwater	1,334
Sooty	8
Oystercatcher	2
Turnstone	2
Black-headed gull	2
Common gull	2
Herring gull	2
Kittiwake	2
Gull	720
Puffin	178
Unidentified (covered in oil)	143
Total at 4 March	2,448

Source: David Wheeler, Cornwall Wildlife Council for Wales.



NICHOLAS SCHOON

A tiny pipistrelle nestles in the hands of its captor after scientists revealed that there are in fact three species of Britain's

most common bat living in these islands.

It was thought only one existed, but experts at Leeds and Bristol universities have found differences in their physical

make up. DNA genetic material, and the frequencies at which they squeak out their echolocation pulses and mating calls - so high pitched that electronic equipment is used to hear them.

One pipistrelle's sound radar works at 45,000 cycles per second, the other at 55,000. The two types number about 2 million bats and appear to mix quite happily, but do not inter-

breed. Kate Barlow, a Bristol University student, has also found evidence that the much rarer Nathusius pipistrelle, once thought to be a vagrant from the continent, is breeding here.

FA denies links with football licensing cartel

STEVE BOGGAN

The Football Association denied last night that it was involved in a multi-million-pound football licensing cartel following a raid on its offices by European Commission investigators.

Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, said he had been "bewildered" when two officials from Brussels, accompanied by staff from the Office of Fair Trading, burst into FA headquarters in west London at 9.15am demanding access to its files.

alleged that Fifa - and its affiliates, including the English FA - were violating the free and fair competition articles of the European Treaty.

According to the Commission, Fifa charges manufacturers 1 Swiss Franc (about 55p) to label its footballs "Fifa Inspected" and 2 Swiss Francs to label them "Fifa Approved", but it says other royalties and administrative costs of the scheme push prices much higher.

Fifa insists that all World Cup matches and qualifiers are played with such balls but it argues that, given that it owns the competition, that is its prerogative.

It made no comment yesterday, but one Fifa source said it would launch a fierce defence of its position. "We choose the balls for the World Cup, but in all other competitions we tell our federation members that they may use either Fifa inspected or approved balls, or a third category which carries no Fifa logo and is not licensed but simply complies with the rules of football," the source said. "Using that type of ball results in no income for Fifa but they are free to use it."

Mr Kelly said he thought the raid was "a wind-up". He added: "My response is to co-operate. I don't know what it is we are supposed to have done, but it's not a major issue."

Animal-liberation activist planned fire-bomb spree

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

An Animal Liberation Front activist who planned a nationwide fire-bombing campaign was found guilty yesterday of conspiring to commit arson.

David Callender, 37, of Waterloo, Merseyside, spent months travelling around the country to compile hit-lists which included information about security and escape routes. Birmingham Crown Court heard. Police said he could have caused millions of pounds of damage. He was foiled after a shopworker became suspicious when he placed a large order for kitchen timers.

Police believe his conviction is a serious blow against the extremist ALF and think he may have been involved in a number of attacks in 1991.

After Callender's arrest, police found at a house in Birmingham enough devices to plant 100 fire bombs and a list of potential targets, including an agricultural college in Humberside, food manufacturers, horse breeders, egg-production companies, foxhound associations, slaughter houses and the Milk Marketing Board.

The police also found plans referring to reconnaissance visits. They believe a bombing campaign was imminent.

The court heard that Callender, who was unemployed and had previous convictions for activities relating to the ALF dating back to 1984, left his girlfriend's house in Merseyside in May 1994 and began living at the house in Sparkhill, Birmingham. Police believe there must have been other people involved researching the targets and funding the campaign but have not traced them.

Callender was trapped in October 1994 after a woman in a wholesale kitchen suppliers in London contacted police after a telephone call from a man asking to buy 60 kitchen timers. Police mounted surveillance and later spotted Callender arriving for the timers. They followed him and arrested him when he went to Cambridge to check out possible targets.

There was evidence that at least one device had been tested and plans showed that some-

one had managed to get inside some of the targets.

Detective Chief Inspector Roger Simpson, of West Midlands Police, said he had no doubt that Callender was an active member of the ALF and could not rule out that he was the same man who bought identical one-hour kitchen timers from the same store in 1991.

Police later found they had been used in a spate of extremist firebomb attacks in the south of England. No one was ever caught for the offences.

Callender had pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to commit arson. He will be sentenced today. His co-defendant, Gregg Avery, 28, of Macclesfield, Cheshire, was found not guilty of the same charge.

US warplanes lease deal rejected

WILL BENNETT

The Government yesterday rejected a plan to lease American F-16 fighters for the RAF, lifting a threat both to thousands of jobs and the £42bn European Fighter Aircraft Programme.

Instead, the Ministry of Defence will pay £125m to upgrade the ageing British-built Tornado F3 fighter to plug the gap until the Eurofighter planned by a consortium of European countries is ready to take over early next century. The MoD



New lease of life: The Tornado is getting a £125m upgrade

has placed the order with British Aerospace to upgrade the F-3, the RAF's principal air defence fighter, to enable it to carry Amraam and Asraam mis-

siles to improve its capability. James Arbuthnot, Minister for Defence Procurement, said: "Together with the radar im-

provement and joint tactical information distribution system with which the aircraft is already being equipped, this upgrade will greatly enhance the capability of the Tornado F3 and provide the Royal Air Force with an up-to-date beyond visual range missile capability."

The now redundant plan to lease F-16 fighters was put forward by David Hart, a special adviser to Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence. John Major is believed to have intervened personally to stop the proposal.

Barnardo's seeks truth for adopted Irish children

JOJO MOYES

MPs and childcare workers have called upon the Irish Government to investigate how hundreds of Irish children were sent to adoptive parents in the United States under falsified birth certificates.

Yesterday in the Dail, Allan Shatter of the Fine Gael party, an expert in family law, set an adjournment debate after it emerged that the adoption agency Barnardo's had been approached by more than 200 Irish people who were sent to the US up to 40 years ago, as young children. When they attempted to trace their origins using America's Freedom of Information Act, they found in many cases that parental names on their birth certificates were false.

Barnardo's is lobbying the government to make Eire's 15 remaining adoption agencies disclose how many children were sent to the US during the 1950s and 1960s. "The state handed over its responsibility for children who needed care to various institutions," said Nora Gibbons of Barnardo's. "We need to know how these children were chosen to go overseas and what happened to them." She added that it did not appear that there was a centralised policy of falsifying birth certificates, but because of the stigma attached to illegitimacy

at the time either the mother or the agency may have changed names to protect both mother and child. Some childcare workers also suspect falsifications may have been made to make it impossible for adopted children to trace their mothers.

"We're asking that the Department of Health, who now has responsibility for care, should set up a contact register so that a mother who gave false information could put the record straight," Ms Gibbons said, adding that Barnardo's had been contacted by a number of Irish birth mothers. "They're old now, often in their 70s, and sometimes members of their families don't know," she said.

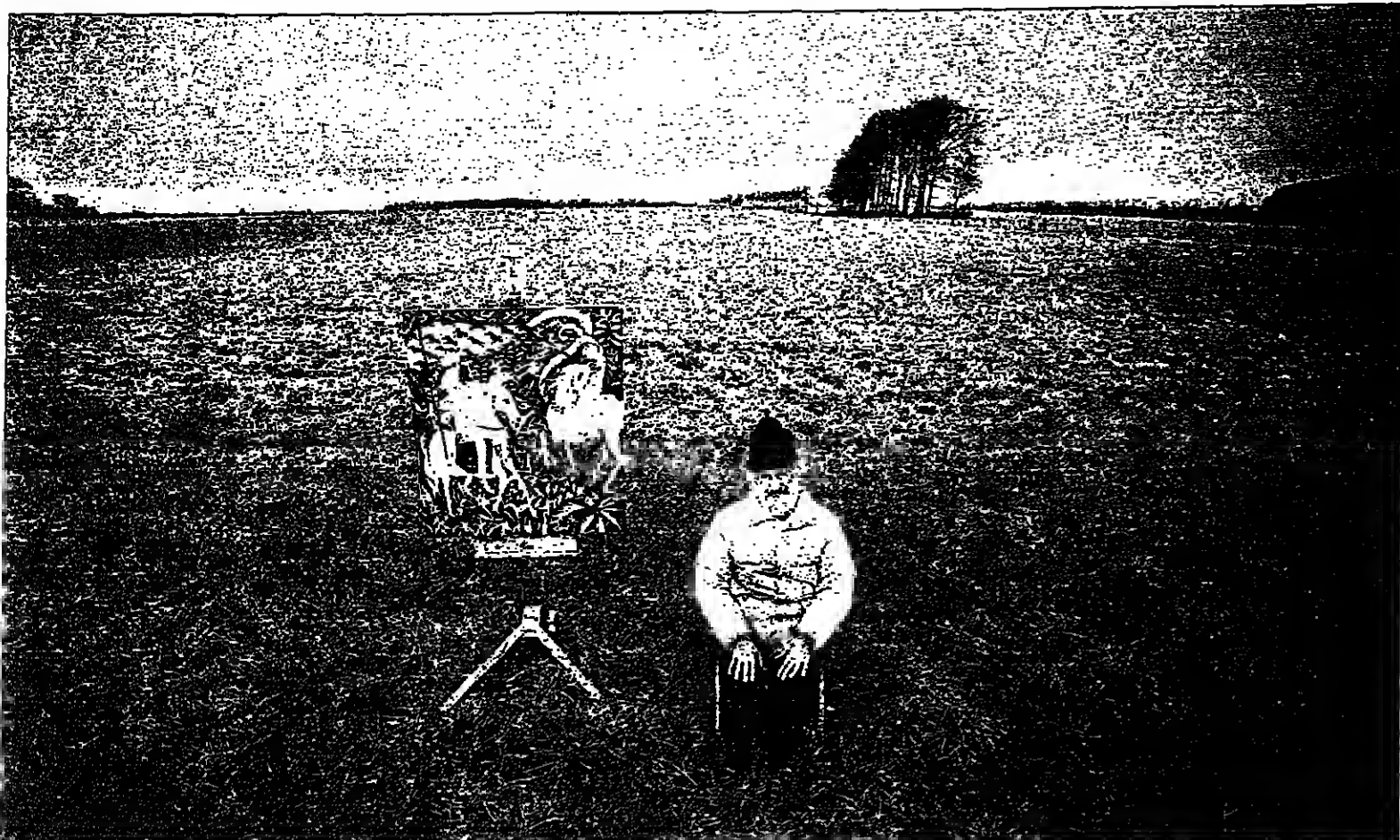
Ms Gibbons said agencies often promised the mothers that their identity would never be known. But she said that the government also had a responsibility to the disinherited. "These people are now adults. It's like saying: you could be president of the United States but we wouldn't trust you to have the information about who you are," she said.

A spokesman for the Irish Department of Health Press Office said last night: "The Health Strategy contains a commitment to introduce changes in adoptive law and procedure to provide arrangements to facilitate contact between adopted persons and their birth parents."

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Coeur de Lion: The artist Philip Sutton on the site of the Battle of Agincourt in France with one of a series of paintings depicting Henry V as portrayed by Shakespeare. They have been commissioned for the opening of the Globe Theatre in London next year. Photograph: Brian Harris

Woman chorister loses claim against royal chapel

A woman chorister who was turned down for a place in the all-male choir at the Queen's chapel in Windsor has lost her case alleging sex discrimination. Dr Joan McDonough, 38, would have been the first woman to take the post of baritone lay clerk in the 644-year

history of St George's Chapel. Her duties would have involved singing at the Sunday service attended by the Queen. She claimed she was rejected when clerics discovered from a referee that she was not a man. An industrial tribunal at Reading, in Berkshire, ruled

yesterday that, as a religious institution founded for charitable purposes, the chapel was not bound by the Sex Discrimination Act. Dr McDonough, a vicar's wife, of Carlinghow, near Batley, West Yorkshire, is one of the country's few female baritones

and has sung with the Royal Choral Society. The post offered accommodation and an income of up to £4,000 a year. She said afterwards: "I do feel that the Church should set an example. If they are claiming to set a moral example, they should be seen to have clean

hands. If they are not committed to equal opportunities and justice, what are they doing?" Lt-Col Nigel Newman, chapter clerk of St George's, said: "When she applied, we found she did not measure up in... experience and qualifications for the post anyway."

Primary maths teaching skills fail to add up

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Primary school teachers are spending a long time teaching arithmetic but their pupils' adding-up skills are still poor, says a report from school inspectors published yesterday.

The report is one of two from the Office for Standards in Education which look at standards of all the national curriculum subjects and religious education in both primary and secondary schools.

In maths, the inspectors attack primary teachers for relying too much on published schemes of work and for using too narrow a range of teaching methods. Too many pupils are bad at mental arithmetic and too few schools have worked out how to use calculators sensibly.

The report says: "Standards in [arithmetic] are disappointing given the time spent teaching this aspect of mathematics. There is frequently too much emphasis on repetitive number work, which does not address pupils' fundamental errors or misconceptions."

"Too many pupils lack a fluency in mental calculation and cannot tell if their answers are reasonable."

In secondary schools, the inspectors blame low standards on teachers who do not put enough emphasis on mental arithmetic and using calculators sensibly.

The inspectors say teaching standards are good enough in around four out of five lessons in primary schools and in an even higher proportion of secondary lessons. But they are concerned that the introduction of tests for 7- and 11-year-olds in primary schools has narrowed the curriculum.

The tests in English, maths and science have encouraged schools to concentrate on these subjects at the expense of others, says the report. "There are fewer opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment, particularly in science."

There is also some evidence that a greater number of teachers are using more whole-class teaching methods rather than group or individual work.

In their overall assessment of primary teaching, the inspectors criticise the standards of marking. "Too many teachers do not mark work regularly and do not tell pupils how they can improve their work."

In secondary schools, by contrast, teachers are conscientious about marking work but

still fail to explain to pupils how they can do better. Some teachers are simply too generous in their marking and encourage pupils to underachieve.

Teachers' expectations of pupils are often too low in both primary and secondary schools. Able pupils, in particular, are underrated.

The report backs up last week's attack on mixed-ability teaching by David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, which says: "Mixed ability teaching requires the utmost in teacher skills."

However, Mr Blunkett's report warns that, even when pupils are set by ability in different subjects, teachers sometimes overestimate the similarity between pupils.

In one in five primary schools teachers do not have enough subject knowledge to teach all the national curriculum subjects properly.

A spokesman for the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority said that the schools' concentration on basic skills, criticised by the inspectors, was exactly what the review of the national curriculum had been designed to achieve. Schools should be emphasising basic literacy and numeracy.

Trendy teachers take the blame

JUDITH JUDD

Inspectors' complaints about standards in maths are not new. In 1925 an inspectors' report said "the accuracy in the manipulation of figures does not reach the same standards as was reached 20 years ago".

However, experts agree that a reaction in the Seventies and Eighties against rote learning has gone too far. Teachers in the Seventies set out to make maths

less frightening: the result was a neglect of mental arithmetic and a shift away from learning times tables by heart. A report from academic mathematicians last September blamed trendy teaching methods for poor standards. They said activities such as "data surveys" were diverting children from basic work such as decimals and fractions.

Professor Margaret Brown, chair of the Joint Mathematical Council, does not want a re-

turn to traditional teaching methods but has argued that teachers have not put enough emphasis on key concepts in arithmetic and algebra.

Others blame mixed-ability teaching for low standards. And schools have had difficulty attracting well-qualified graduates to teach maths. While 90 per cent of those teaching English have a second class degree or better, in maths 40 per cent have a third class degree or worse.

Zulu boy 'must return home'

A boy brought to Britain for adoption by a white woman must be returned to his Zulu parents and homeland, where he could face a life of poverty, the Court of Appeal has ruled.

The court decided yesterday that the 10-year-old, a ward of the court who can only be named as "P", must go even though he will grieve over the woman he knows as his mother and his adopted sisters.

His natural mother worked as a housekeeper and nanny for the woman who brought him to

Britain four years ago because she feared political turmoil and eventual civil war in South Africa. The woman, who is a British citizen with an African background, wanted the boy to be adopted as a member of her family and live in Maida Vale, north-west London, and eventually be educated at a leading British school.

But Lord Justice Neill and Lord Justice Ward came to the "difficult and anxious" decision that the boy should be returned immediately to his

parents to reclaim his Zulu language and roots in his native Lebo, Transvaal.

They also warned the woman that he must not return to visit her in Britain this year, to give him a chance to settle back in his country and adjust to the "very different" life there.

The judgment came after the woman had appealed against a High Court order that the boy should be returned to South Africa next year and his mother had cross-appealed for his immediate return.

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NHS dilemma: Split over provision of services for children in Manchester

Rapid action urged to settle hospitals saga

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The NHS Executive was yesterday told by the Ashworth inquiry that it must sort out specialist children's services in Manchester – just as the latest attempt to do so in a 10-year saga bit the dust.

Three local health authorities finally withdrew a proposal that the Ashworth report says is needed to close the Booth Hall children's hospital in north Manchester and centre neuro-surgery and other specialist services on the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital site at Salford.

This proposal foundered, however, in the face of intense local opposition to the Booth Hall closure and legal action by Manchester City Council, which argued successfully in preliminary judicial review hearings that the plan was not properly costed. Yesterday, the Manchester, Salford and Trafford

health authorities formally accepted the argument in court, and agreed to meet Manchester council's costs.

Opponents of the plan – which had near universal medical backing – included Graham Stringer, the council leader, who was hoping to be adopted (as he has been) as prospective Labour candidate in Blackley, the constituency which houses Booth Hall.

Yesterday he said opposition across all political parties in three local authorities to the Booth Hall closure "gave the lie" to suggestions that the parliamentary nomination influenced his stand. The fault lay with the health authorities for getting procedures wrong and failing to justify their proposals.

They may, however, now be revived. Yesterday's report – which follows the death of 10-year-old Nicholas Geldard, who died of a brain haemorrhage while being ferried between four hospitals in an attempt to

find a vacant intensive care bed – makes clear they would not have saved the boy's life.

But the report states bluntly that "the time for talk" over reorganising the services is "over", that continuing uncertainty is hitting recruitment and morale, and that action to end the present split of specialist children's services on different sites must be taken "as soon as possible".

However, Dr Ian Groat, chief executive of Salford Health Authority, said there remained "serious difficulties" in getting agreement on reorganising services between three health commissions (authorities), 10 NHS trusts whose services could be affected, five community health councils and three local authorities. "We felt the solution we were seeking may not have been the best possible solution, but that it was the only feasible way at the time of improving the services."

The saga – which began a decade ago, with the Booth Hall

closure emerging as the favoured option last year – showed the difficulty of planning in the city, he said. Local opposition to loss of a service was understandable, he said, even though the change would improve services for all children in the region. "It is not easy to win the argument that a local hospital closure would be to the benefit of all children right across the region when local people still see it as a valued local hospital being taken away".

With so many players involved, the division between purchasers and providers had not helped, he added, although agreement had been no easier to reach when reorganisation was first proposed in 1985 before the NHS reforms.

Despite yesterday's report, a solution may remain elusive. Mr Stringer said some reorganisation of services was needed, but the council still rejected the idea of one "super hospital" for children or the closure of Booth Hall.

Leah's liver sent abroad in bed crisis

GLENDIA COOPER

A leading transplant surgeon yesterday criticised the lack of intensive care beds in British hospitals after the shortage contributed to the liver of the ecstasy casualty Leah Betts being sent to Spain.

Professor Sir Roy Calne, consultant surgeon at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, said what had happened was a "disaster" for British transplant patients and highlighted the "very serious problems" hospitals faced because of a shortage of beds in intensive care units.

Leah, 18, of Letchington, Essex, died after taking an ecstasy tablet at a party in November last year. Her parents allowed her heart, liver, lungs, corneas and kidneys to be donated.

But when her liver was offered to all seven of Britain's hospital liver transplant centres – the Royal Free and King's College, both London, St James's, Leeds, Newcastle Freeman, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, Queen Elizabeth, Birmingham, and Addenbrooke's – none of them was able to accept it.

Addenbrooke's was unable to accept it because it had no intensive care beds for patients after surgery and three hospitals, St James's, King's College and the Newcastle Freeman, had no suitable recipients for the liver. The remaining three would not comment but it is thought one was unable to accept the liver because of a bed shortage.

Sir Roy, who carried out Britain's first liver transplant nearly 30 years ago, said: "Fortunately in this case the liver was



Sir Roy Calne: Attack on intensive care shortages

used by someone in Spain... But it's a shame that it couldn't have been used by a British patient. I have now had to turn down 29 livers in just over a year because of a shortage of ICU beds. In that time we have had 11 patients die."

Dr Peter Wallace, president of the Intensive Care Society, which represents doctors working in intensive care units, said it was an increasing problem.

He said the problem "had been clearly recognised" by surgeons and doctors across the United Kingdom for some time and a shortage of nurses trained to work in intensive care units had made matters worse. "I think intensive care has tended to get lost because it's only a small part of a hospital," added Dr Wallace, who is based in Dundee. He estimated 1,500 intensive care beds were available in Britain and said that should be increased to 2,200.

Patient gets triple-organ transplant

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A cancer patient has undergone a pioneering multi-organ transplant at a hospital in Leeds, believed to be the first of its kind in Europe.

Haldene Butler, 23, of Omagh, Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland, received a new liver, bowel, and pancreas, at St James's Hospital, in Leeds, just over a week ago.

Mr Butler, who had developed cancer in all three organs, is said to be making a "remarkable recovery" from the eight and a half-hour operation.

Stephen Pollard, one of the surgeons who carried out the surgery, said last night: "The operation was less difficult than we anticipated and it went very well. There were no problems while we were in surgery and we're delighted that Mr Butler has adapted well to his new organs."

It is very unusual for a cancer patient to undergo a transplant because of fears that the disease will have already spread throughout the body and the patient will die anyway.

However, Mr Butler is suffering from a very rare tumour which had spread locally only into the liver, bowel, and stomach wall from a primary site in the pancreas. "We were confident that the disease had not spread any further, otherwise we would not have done it," Mr Pollard said. He has carried out liver transplants on other patients suffering from similar tumours and the five-year survival rate is about 70 per cent.

Mr Butler is expected to be up and walking within the next few days, and could be discharged from hospital in about a month. His father, Walter, mother, Lila, and his fiancée, Julie Feather, have been by his bedside throughout the ordeal.

His father said: "It was worrying from the point of view that they'd never done the operation before, but we had no option. When you've no choice, you just have to make the best of it."

Ms Feather added: "He'd waited so long to be cured. He just wanted to live a normal life. Before the operation the rest of us were running round panicking, but he was wonderful."

Mr Butler was referred to St James's from the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. Within hours of an organ donor being found he was flying to Leeds for the operation.

The majority of multi-organ transplants in the UK are heart and lung of which up to 50 a year are carried out.

There has been just one more complicated multi-organ transplant in the UK in which a patient also received a kidney and stomach, along with liver, bowel, and pancreas.

American surgeons have pioneered the concept of multi-organ transplants, but have been beset with problems with rejection and infection which has hampered development of the programme. Laura Davies, who died aged five in 1993, is Britain's most famous multi-organ transplantee. She underwent two transplants in 15 months at the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital in Pennsylvania.



Trouble stirring: Palm House staff may join the Kew pay protest. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Kew staff to down tools in protest over pay

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Something is stirring in the undergrowth at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, in west London. A revolt is afoot on the issue of pay among the hewers of wood and drawers of water – in fact they are highly qualified botanists and horticulturalists who tend more than 60,000 species of plants.

Normally a byword for placidity and dedication, the highly specialised gardeners are to abandon their 500 acres on Friday in protest at a basic pay offer of 0.9 per cent and the introduction of performance pay. It will be the first piece of industrial action at Kew since the gardens were established more than two centuries ago.

Staff are angry because the proposed increase is "paltry", that it is more than seven months overdue and that it involves an allegedly dubious calculation of how each individual is measuring up to management demands.

Paul Moloney, the regional organiser for the GMB general union, said staff were particularly concerned about the introduction of performance pay, adding: "How are they going to measure performance? The number of weeds they pull up? Or perhaps the growth rate of the plants for which my members are responsible. I have had more intelligent conversations with plants than with Kew management."

Mr Moloney said most of the gardeners earn between £6,500 and £11,000 a year and would receive an increase of around 2.5 per cent, of which only 0.9 per cent is guaranteed. "Most of them have been through further and higher education and see their jobs as a vocation. They don't want to jeopardise the health of the plants, but they have to live in the real world and they are taking industrial action as a last resort."

A management spokesman calculated that on average employees would get an increase of 6.5 per cent and that pay varied between £8,831 and £15,432.

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'Get tough on firms that kill'

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Companies should be charged with a newly created offence of "corporate killing" if their gross carelessness and incompetence results in death, under proposals published yesterday by an influential law body.

The Law Commission's call follows a series of disasters in which corporations were deemed to be seriously at fault,

but were not successfully prosecuted. Examples given by the commission included the 1987 *Herald of Free Enterprise* ferry capsized in which 187 people died; the 1988 Piper Alpha oil platform explosion which killed 167; and the 1988 Clapham rail crash, which killed 35.

The commission said firms convicted of "corporate killing" should be liable to an unlimited fine and ordered to take action to ensure the accident is

not repeated. The Home Office is to consider the report, *Involuntary Manslaughter*. Labour said it would introduce the offence at the first opportunity.

The commission said the main reason for the lack of successful prosecutions against firms was that prosecutions for corporate manslaughter can now be brought only where one person can be identified as the company's "controlling mind" and said to have unlawfully

caused the deaths. This has been extremely difficult. There have been only four prosecutions in Britain of a corporation for manslaughter and just one resulted in a conviction. Peter Kite and his company OLL Ltd were both found guilty of manslaughter in December 1994 after the Lyme Bay canoeing tragedy in which four children died. Kite was jailed for three years and the firm fined £60,000.

Another view, page 15

DAILY POEM

Figurine

By Charles Boyle

I like too
the shape you make
when you're trying on a new little something
when facing away
from the full-length mirror
you hollow your back,
make a half-turn
so that the heel of one foot is lifted up,
and look expectantly down
to observe the effect
from behind
as if you're following yourself
home
incognito

Charles Boyle was born in 1951 in Leeds. He grew up in Yorkshire and was educated at Cambridge University, after which he taught for some years in Egypt and Morocco. Since then he has worked in publishing. The recipient of a Cholmondeley Award in 1982, he has published five collections, this poem taken from his most recent, *Paleface* (Faber, £6.99).

Jaguar unveils classic sports coupé



Jaguar's new XK8 sports coupé (above), which is being hailed as the spiritual successor to the E-type model, was unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show yesterday. Its predecessor was said to have stopped a generation

in its tracks when it was launched in the swinging Sixties. However, Jaguar has designed the new model, which will go on sale in October with a £52,000 price tag, to replace the XJS. Photograph: Bestir Stamp/VAP

politics

Blair lays claim to homeowners

JOHN RENTOU
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair attempted to present Labour as the party of home ownership yesterday, calling the Tories "the homeowners' party". But he found himself mocked for proposing policies already on offer from building societies.

Mr Blair accused the Government of "tearing up its contract" with homeowners by cutting mortgage tax relief, raising taxes and adding to job insecurity.

But Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, delivered a swashbuckling rebuke in the Commons to Labour's plan to deal with the problem of negative equity, seizing on Mr Blair's suggestion that mortgage lenders should offer loans of more than the value of houses so that borrowers with a good repayment record can move house. Waving a pile of building society brochures, he declared: "They've all got the schemes. They are already there, doing it. The market has spoken. Tory government works."

Mr Blair had earlier told a Labour housing conference in London: "I fully understand the very human aspiration to own your own home." And he said he was "the first to acknowledge the successes of the Right to Buy". The Tory policy of offering discounts to council tenants which was bitterly opposed by Labour in the early 1980s.

Presenting new Labour as the party to "restore the shattered confidence of homeowners and those who want to buy", he set



out a series of measures to get the housing market moving again.

■ More "lifestyle" mortgages, to suit self-employed or contract workers, which allow people to postpone repayments during temporary loss of income.

■ More mortgages for more than 100 per cent of valuations to help those suffering negative equity to move.

■ A "staircase" between owning and renting to allow people

to move from one to another according to their circumstances.

■ League tables of commission and fees charged by mortgage lenders.

■ The selling of mortgages to subject to the requirement to give best advice as now applies to pensions under the Financial Services Act.

■ Leaseholders to get a "right to manage" their properties if rogue landlords failed to do so.

■ Bringing in "commonhold"

as a new form of tenure for collective ownership of flats.

The last two measures command cross-party support. The "right to manage" is in the Housing Bill at present going through Parliament, but commonhold has been waiting for parliamentary time for some years.

Diana Maddock, Liberal Democrat MP for Christchurch, attacked Mr Blair's speech: "Yet again all we are seeing a bland

wish list, more warm words and waffle - Labour would rely on goodwill from lenders to solve all the problems."

The Liberal Democrats demand the restoration of social security help with mortgage payments for the unemployed - taken away by the Government last year.

Meanwhile, Mr Blair backed up his attack on the Government's housing record with a visit to a south London couple

caught in the negative equity trap. Dani Johnston-Jones, 40, bought her Camberwell studio flat on a 100 per cent mortgage for £63,000 in 1990 - but the best figure an estate agent can now offer her is £31,000.

Mr Blair said: "Of course we cannot wave a magic wand and say everything will be all right but at least we can make a start and help people in extreme difficulties."

Leading article, page 14

Heseltine caught up in fine points of fish fiasco

□ Eurosceptics seize on Spanish ruling
□ 'Crown jewels' of sport prized for TV

The foul smell of a fish fiasco enveloped Michael Heseltine at Question Time yesterday as Tory Eurosceptics reacted with predictable anger at the decision of the European Court of Justice in favour of Spanish fishermen.

With the Scott report fading in MPs' minds, Mr Heseltine could reasonably have expected an easy time, deputising for the absent Prime Minister. But once again the treatment of the fishing industry by European institutions has galvanised the sceptics.

According to Tony Marlow, Conservative MP for Northampton North, the court's go-ahead to Spanish fishermen to claim millions in compensation for being banned from UK waters was an assault on British sovereignty.

The Tory John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood) asked the Deputy Prime Minister to reassure his constituents about the "grave consequences" of the European Court's retroactive decision. He urged Mr Heseltine to endorse comments by the fisheries minister Tony Baldry that "the quota-hoppers have to go" and that the Government would raise the issue at the Intergovernmental conference [IGC].

"It is obviously a decision which we regret and one which we shall certainly take up in the context of the IGC. We believe that there have to be changes," Mr Heseltine replied.

He gave much the same unspecific answer to another sceptic, Nicholas Budgen, who asked if the Government's proposals to the IGC were accepted by other EU members, would they give protection against judgements of the Spanish fishermen type.

Despite a warning that half a million Tory votes could be lost, the Government yesterday

set its face against a cross-party move to ensure the highlights of all sporting events remain universally available to viewers and listeners.

The former Labour sports minister Lord Howell wanted to add a new clause to the Broadcasting Bill to end live coverage deals which prevent highlights being shown on other channels. A classic example was Monday night's clash between Newcastle United and Manchester United, shown exclusively on Sky Sports.

The Government has already bowed to pressure to guarantee

Inside
Parliament

Stephen
Goodwin

that the sporting "crown jewels" - eight "listed" events including the FA Cup, Olympics and England Test matches - remain on regular television.

But Lord Howell told the House, as the Bill was considered on report, that unless action is taken to protect the rights of the public, events such as the Ryder Cup, the Open Golf Championship, Cheltenham Gold Cup, Royal Ascot and the Five Nations rugby tournament could disappear from the TV sets of millions of homes.

Dire political consequences were seen by the Conservative Earl of Harrowby, who warned ministers: "I can think of no better way of giving for my party 500,000 votes at the next election than by denying the general public the opportunity to watch not the finals of Wimbledon but the whole of Wimbledon."

Tory centre ground fights back

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Political Correspondent

Centre-ground Tories moved to rebuild their fortunes yesterday with the first of a series of papers aimed at stemming the Conservative Party's drift to the right.

The essays, written by members of the Macleod Group of "One Nation" Tories, came despite the efforts of Conservative Central Office to block publication of what could be taken to be an alternative left-of-centre "manifesto".

The most provocative con-

tribution so far comes from Quentin Davies, the MP for Stamford and Spalding, in a paper published via the Conservative Group for Europe praising the benefits of a single currency.

Two other papers published through the Tory Reform Group - on education, by Malcolm Thornton MP and industrial policy, by Patrick Thompson - are less controversial in themselves. But the exercise as a whole is intended to be a key part of a campaign for the Tories to be the party of moderate policies, appealing

to the middle ground of British politics.

Mr Davies declares in his paper that the "prospective attractions of a single currency are momentous. We would willingly have paid a high price indeed for shelter from the currency crises which have beset us intermittently, and very destructively, over the past 30 years when we were experiencing them - though memories are short."

But all the benefits, substantial though they were, were "almost eclipsed by the stability and cost-of-capital attrac-

tions of a single currency". Mr Davies insisted yesterday that interest rates would be lower if the pound were part of the single currency. "As a result the average household would be £10 a week better off."

The MP argues in the paper that international financial markets remained fearful of the tendency to devalue, so real interest rates had to be higher. "The cost to the taxpayer of the risk premium demanded by the markets is . . . of the order of £3.7m per annum, or three to four pence on the standard rate of income tax."

Labour MPs defy Sinn Fein ban

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

A group of Labour MPs last night met Mitchell McLoughlin, a leading member of Sinn Fein, in a breach of the cross-party ban on contacts with Sinn Fein following the London Docklands bombing.

The MPs, who included prominent left-wingers, used the meeting at Westminster to demand a return to the ceasefire.

"The worrying thing is that Mitchell McLoughlin told us he was unable to deliver a ceasefire. We told him to go back to the IRA and tell them that it was the only way forward," a Labour MP who was at the meeting said. The MPs, members of the backbench Northern Ireland committee, meeting unofficially, warned Mr McLoughlin that unless the ceasefire was restored, Sinn Fein would get no support from Labour for its demands for a place at the negotiating table, and would be isolated in Ulster.

British and Irish ministers have refused to meet Sinn Fein since the resumption of the IRA bombing campaign. They refused to meet a delegation from Sinn Fein in Belfast on Monday at the start of the

"proximity" talks in Stormont. It was unclear whether Mr McLoughlin was meeting officials of the London and Dublin governments have been maintained.

Ministers believe the move by Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, to meet ministers on Monday was a public relations exercise, designed to win sympathy in the United States, which he will be visiting for the St Patrick's Day celebrations.

Senior ministers are pessimistic about the chances of the ceasefire being restored. They are planning to improve intelligence on the IRA in Ireland, which failed the Government when the bomb was planted at Docklands. But Mr McLoughlin told the MPs he, too, was unaware that the bomb was going to be planted and the ceasefire ended by the IRA.

Ministers believe the IRA is back in the bands of the hard-line terrorists, and that Mr Adams has lost his influence over the gunmen.

The two governments have set 10 June as the deadline for all-party talks following elections. Sinn Fein will be excluded from the negotiations, unless the ceasefire is restored.

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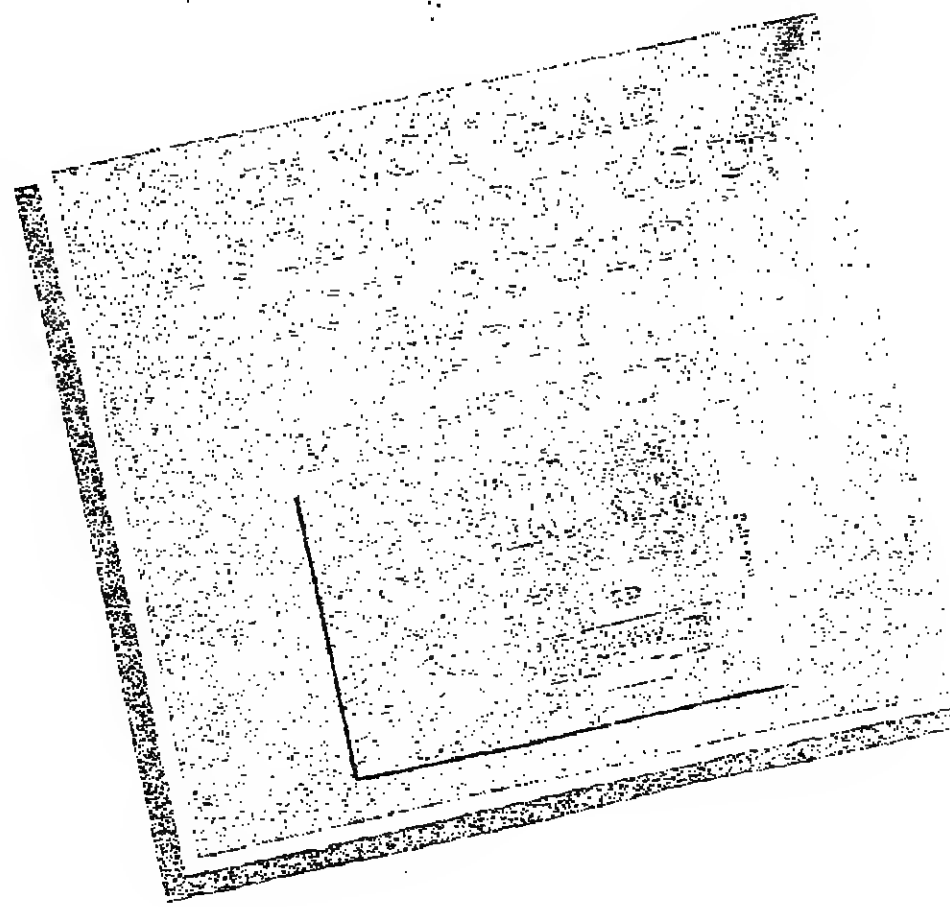
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international

Crisis in the Middle East: Teenagers reveal intense support for Hamas as Israelis prepare crackdown on two terrorist 'fronts'

Peace call falls on deaf ears in Bethlehem

PATRICK COCKBURN
Bethlehem

As Israel ordered all Palestinians on the West Bank to stay in their towns and villages yesterday, 1,000 people attended a peace rally in Wangan Square in Bethlehem. It was held as a rally of school teachers and pupils to show their rejection of the suicide bombings of Hamas and support for peace with Israel.

It did not quite work out that way. Father Erando Vacca, an Italian priest who is principal of the St Jean Bosco technical school in Bethlehem, said: "Half of our 108 pupils would not come because they are pro-Hamas. You cannot change their minds. They say they [the bombers] were martyrs."

Even among the teenage boys at the rally, organised by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, some refused to condemn the suicide attacks. Ibrahim, 17, said: "From the human side I am very sorry to see the young people killed in Tel Aviv, but politically I support Hamas because the Israelis did the same thing to us."

His friends nodded assent as Ibrahim outlined what was wrong with the Oslo peace agreement. "It is a peace without rights," he said. "We don't have all our land, we don't

have control of water and electricity, our towns are sealed off from Israel and workers in Gaza can't feed their families."

Ibrahim noted the disadvantages. "Now all the world will think the Palestinians are terrorists. Everybody will defend the Israelis." But he thought the assassination of Yehuda Avish, the chief Hamas bomb maker, in January showed "the Israelis wanted revenge".

Bethlehem is a moderate town with a population which is 40 per cent Christian. Israeli soldiers evacuated the police station just before Christmas and it is now occupied by affable Palestinian policemen. "You can see that people support peace," said Jamil Hijazi, an English teacher. "Three-quarters of people here voted for it in our election in January."

This may be true. For young men like Ibrahim, however, Oslo is a peace without glamour which accepted the reality of Palestinian defeat in 1948. Its great advantage to Palestinians was that it removed the Israeli occupation and made their lives much easier. But since the Tel Aviv bombing benefits of the Oslo accord are being thrown into reverse, the "iron fist" policy with which Israel tried to combat the Palestinian *intifada* rebellion after 1987 is returning.

Jerusalem is sealed off to Palestinians. Movement on the roads between the autonomous areas has been stopped. Shops are closed on the main road south to Hebron, which is now unlikely to be evacuated. The homes of two bombers are scheduled for demolition at al-Fawwar refugee camp.

Ani Yehalon, the head of Shin Bet, the Israeli intelligence service, and now heading an inter-agency task force designed to hunt the bombers, says that there are hundreds of Palestinian youth "waiting in line" to commit suicide attacks. He told the Knesset that in al-Fawwar, with a population of 6,000, Israel had found 30 to 40 youths between 15 and 20 who had declared their willingness to carry out a suicide attack. He said bombers were mainly recruited from those studying Islam in mosques and seminaries.

"Hamas is an idea, not an organisation," said Mr Ayalon. "And that is a difficult dilemma with which Arafat will have to deal." He said that as long as the preaching in praise of martyrs continues it will be easy for Hamas to find recruits. Israel is therefore insisting that the whole Hamas infrastructure - providing the ideological basis for the bombing campaign - has to be eliminated by Mr Arafat.



Mourners at the funeral of Inbar Atia, who was killed in Monday's bus bombing in Tel Aviv. Photograph: Nati Hamik/AP

Soldiers killed in south Lebanon clashes

ROBERT FISK
Amman

Four Israeli fighter-bombers circled ominously over Beirut yesterday evening as Lebanon waited to discover if Israel would retaliate for one of the most devastating attacks in many months on its occupation troops in the south of the country. Although overshadowed by the latest suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, the carefully laid double ambush - mounted by a joint Hizbollah-Palestinian guerrilla unit - left at least four Israelis dead, one of them a colonel, and wounded nine.

Israeli military helicopters were flying across the hills north of the Lebanese border last night, only a few miles from the scene of the attacks, which set off a firefight lasting several hours and left two Palestinians dead.

The ambush began along the electrified frontier wire separating the two countries when a three-man Palestinian squad - later identified as members of the "Islamic Palestinian Revolutionary Army" - opened fire with rifles on a civilian car containing Israeli soldiers who were driving towards the border from Israel.

One of the soldiers was killed instantly and another was wounded before dozens of Israeli troops poured across the border to search for the attackers with the aid of helicopters. Only a few hours later, the Israeli searchers were approaching the Lebanese village of Houle in armoured vehicles when Hizbollah militiamen set off a massive roadside bomb which blasted open one of the armoured carriers and killed three of the soldiers inside. In the aftermath, Israeli troops fired hundreds of illuminating flares, one of which fell into a Lebanese home, wounding six civilians, three of them children.

It was the second recorded instance of collaboration between Hizbollah and a Palestinian Islamist group in southern Lebanon. The latter movement - which local security authorities believe is trained by Hizbollah members - was also responsible for the flight of a tiny single-seater aircraft over Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon two weeks ago, a journey which came to a sudden end when it was shot down by Israeli anti-aircraft fire. Lebanese troops seized two identical German-made wooden aircraft in the Lebanese Bekaa Valley in January, both in a building controlled by the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

There may therefore be sufficient linkage between Palestinian Islamists and Hizbollah to tempt the Israelis to spread any retaliation for the Hamas suicide bombings into Lebanon - even though Hamas was not more involved in the double attacks here than Hizbollah was in the Israeli bombings. Which is why the four jets circling Beirut last night troubled all who saw them.

A Palestinian in Sidon on watch for Israeli attacks

peace talks with Israel in the United States. But at the same time it facilitates the controversial meeting between Tehran and Arab organisations opposed to the peace process. "Despite the collaboration between Arafat and the Zionist regime, the recent operations in occupied Palestine will not only lead to the collapse of the peace talks imposed by the United States and Israel but will place the opponents in a much better position to stop the process," Tehran radio said.

Hunger for war amid rubble of Dizengoff Street

STEPHANIE NOLEN
Tel Aviv

At the site of Monday's bombing in Tel Aviv which killed 12 people, nobody wanted to talk about peace.

Several hundred angry protesters stood by the heap of left-over metal and broken glass, carrying signs saying "No Peace. We Want War", and jeering at any mention of the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres.

In the crowd of onlookers, many of whom identified themselves as left-wing and once in favour of the peace process, were saying they would vote for the right-wing Likud party in elections slated for 29 May. Former Likud supporters wanted an alternative further to the right. "Nobody has a solution for a problem like this, but I will vote right-wing this time," said Haim Metz, standing in the rubble of his sandwich shop, a few

metres from the site of the blast. "It may not be the best thing for Israelis, but it will be the best thing for our enemies. If we elect Likud, it will... show that we can be more extreme."

Mr Metz said he believed this attack would be the end of the peace process. "Tel Aviv is the heart of Israel, and right here, Dizengoff Street is the heart of the city. And they've done it here, twice, in the past year and a half." In October 1994, a

Hamas suicide bomber killed 22, a few hundred metres from Mr Metz's store. "The people are angry," he said. "They don't want peace."

Mr Metz said he wasn't sure what the government could have done to stop the attack, but many of his fellow onlookers had theories. "They should kill the whole family of this bomber, and the next one will be afraid to do it," said Ariel Triska, who owns a bridal boutique in the

Dizengoff centre. Mr Triska, 35, said he used to support the peace process but after the recent Hamas attacks, he would vote "further right than Likud".

Katli West, who is originally from London and has lived in Israel for 12 years, said she believed the government should go into the West Bank and "kill a few thousand Palestinians like King Hussein of Jordan did. If they'd done it years ago, nothing would ever have hap-

pened". Ms West, 30, says she'll vote Likud.

Across the street in the wreckage of the pharmacy she manages, Sharon Ben Yehuda was a lone voice in favour of the continuation of the peace process with the PLO. "We're Israeli, we've lived through this so many times before," she said. "It's awful to say we're used to it but it's true." Ms Ben Yehuda, 46, worries about her children. Still, she said, she will vote

for Mr Peres. Behind Ms Ben Yehuda was her son, Oded, 18. He spent several frightened hours after the blast on Monday, unable to get to the pharmacy through the police barricades, and not knowing if she was safe. "It was really scary, just so scary," he said, keeping his eyes trained on his mother as she picked her way through the rubble.

Yesterday he was staying right by her side.

Media fear Arafat and Peres will fall together

ADEL DARWISH

The reaction in the Arab media mirrored the scene of the Tel Aviv explosion: confusion and shattered ideas among those who had thought they knew where they stood.

Editorials indicated that the Islamic movement Hamas would prefer to engage in a "dance of death" with a hard-line Likud government, rather than risk diminishing its influence by making a peace deal with the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres.

The consensus among the leader-writers is that the fates of Mr Arafat and Mr Peres are linked. If Mr Peres is defeated in the coming Israeli election in May, so several papers argued, Mr Arafat will go down with him.

Many also blamed Israel for escalating the violence and some, especially the London-based Arabic papers, accused Israel of creating the Islamic resistance in the first place.

Arab Nationalists and left-wing writers who in the past rejoiced when disasters had befallen the Jewish state, found it hard to applaud Hamas. They are themselves on the receiving end of the Islamists' terror.

"Hamas's bombs are the most serious threat to peace since the search for peace began over two decades ago," wrote a columnist in the semi-official Cairo daily *Al-Ahram*, a paper which has never in the past been sympathetic to Israel.

Meanwhile, the government-controlled Egyptian television news bulletins condemned the bombing, saying "such actions cannot be tolerated. The second item was the arrest of 41 Muslim leaders and 'smashing their cells'."



Arafat: Under attack from Hamas and Israel

However, leaders of the outlawed Muslim Brothers warned Mr Arafat against "the temptation to follow the wishes of the Jews and fight the Islamic groups, especially Hamas."

According to the Saudi newspaper *al-Jawab*, which quoted Mustafa Mashhour, the leader of the Brothers. He said: "Hamas is not a terrorist organisation, but a nationalist movement whose offer of a truce was rejected by Israel because Israel wants instability."

Mr Arafat, whose dilemma generated many sympathetic editorials, "as he is kicked by the two sides [Hamas and Israel]",

is also warned against being seen as "Israel's gendarme", by Jihad el-Khazen, the respected editor of the pro-Saudi *Al-Hayat*. "Arafat, who lost a great deal through no fault of his own, could cut further losses by not giving in to Israel's demands."

Mr el-Khazen reminded Israel, "which has a powerful army and a daring intelligence service", not to burden the Palestinian leadership with "its own failure in dealing with Hamas, instead of admitting that it reaps what it sows against Hamas has sown".

An editorial in an Egyptian radio service expressed a concern that Israel's promise to hunt down Hamas supporters "everywhere" could send the "cycle of violence, retaliation and counter-retaliation spinning across borders in the region."

An editorial in the London-based pro-Arafat *Al-Quds*, was rather pessimistic, as it drew parallels with the attempt on the life of the Israeli ambassador, Moshe Argov, outside the Dorchester Hotel, in London, in 1982, which triggered the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent exile of the PLO in Tunisia.

"Hopefully", the editor wrote, "Mr Peres still remembers the disaster that followed [the former Israeli prime minister] Menachem Begin's disastrous folly... The invasion did not end attacks from Lebanon against Israel, but instead ignited the *intifada*, which bled Israel for four years."



A Palestinian in Sidon on watch for Israeli attacks

Tehran hails 'revolutionary martyrs'

SAFA HAERI

Iran said that as a result of the suicide bombings in Israel, "the peace process will one way or another come to a halt, for the Islamic revolutionaries seeking martyrdom will accept nothing less than the complete freedom of their homeland from Zionist occupation."

State-run Tehran radio said that new measures by the "Zionist occupiers, and which include torture, destroying houses, raids on worshippers, brutal repression of the [Palestinian] freedom fighters, will not only yield no result, but rather foster and strengthen their fight against the occupation forces."

In their reporting of the attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Iranian media refer to the victims as "Zionist soldiers".

No reference is made to the fact that the bombings took place in buses or public places, killing innocent people.

In Damascus last week, Iranian officials met leaders of organisations rejecting the peace process, expressing their satisfaction at past operations and

assuring them of "all kind of support" for coming ones.

Those present at the meeting included Hussein Shalihin, formerly a deputy foreign minister but whose real responsibility as a top intelligence officer at the information (intelligence) ministry is to co-ordinate the activities of all the so-called Islamic liberation fronts, particularly those in the Middle East targeting Israel and the United States.

The role played by Syria remains mysterious. On one hand, Damascus continues

peace talks with Israel in the United States.

But at the same time it facilitates the controversial meeting between Tehran and Arab organisations opposed to the peace process.

"Despite the collaboration between Arafat and the Zionist regime, the recent operations in occupied Palestine will not only lead to the collapse of the peace talks imposed by the United States and Israel but will place the opponents in a much better position to stop the process," Tehran radio said.

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Margaret McKay

On being informed that Margaret McKay, his parliamentary colleague for Clapham, had set up a replica, tent and all, of a Palestinian refugee camp in Trafalgar Square, the exasperation of the then Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, knew no bounds. Any comment to convey his outrage was too mellow. "And I'm expected to run a constructive British foreign policy in the Middle East with this woman's vote!"

The felony was compounded by the fact that on 12 June 1968 McKay, who was chairman of the Jordan Refugee Week Committee, donated Arab robes to lead a deputation of fellow British and Jordanian MPs, along with Mrs Ahmed Elayan and her baby son Ghada and Mr Ismael Mohammed Ismael from Palestine, to the Foreign Office. Contrite McKay was not – and poured petrol on the flames by telling Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that she thought, as a Cold Warrior, that he was quite unsuitable for this job in government.

Some months earlier she had retailed to a verbal onslaught from George Brown, Stewart's predecessor as Foreign Secretary, by telling him (unfairly) that his attitude to the Arabs was such that she thought that he ought to have learnt to behave properly when he was a shop assistant dealing with furs in a store.

Alex Kitson, chairman of the International Committee of the Labour Party, who knew McKay well, recalls: "When she was around the Trades Union Congress she was a rebel on behalf of the staff who, ironically, were not as well unionised as they ought to have been. In particular she did not like the general secretary of her own trade union, Arthur Deacon; and he liked her less."

However, Kitson adds that though she was a thorn in so many people's sides she was always prepared to be of help to those who needed it and his memories of her are good. She had been for a decade the women's officer of the TUC and was no great respecter of persons in authority. When I said to her, "Margaret, you're an MP

for the constituency of the underdog", she replied a trifle tartly: "And, I am, the under-bitch!" I knew I had been rebuffed.

To understand Margaret McKay's behaviour, it is more than usually necessary to reflect on her life before she became MP for Clapham at the age of 54. In her moving autobiography *Generation in Revolt* (1993), written under her maiden name Margaret McCarthy, she begins Chapter 1: "My mother was a rebel. She married a foreigner – an Irishman, and a Catholic, and she became a socialist!" The flagrant defiance of these steps, the utter flouting of the traditions of her family, can only be understood against the background of the life of the Lancashire moors. "My mother's father was Catlow, the Catlow family reaches back to the days of the Norman lords of Oswaldtwistle. As far back as the 13th century records reveal the existence of the Catlows of Oswaldtwistle. Pete son of Richard de Catlow was there in 1305."

McKay outlines how the family were landowners; how the old families had been accustomed for untold generations to live in close units on their an-

cient holdings, watching their flocks. Her mother was the first known member of the Catlow family in all the centuries to break out of the old tradition and marry outside the family circle. Worse still, she married one of the despised and feckless Irish families who had come to Lancashire to seek work in the cotton mills. Margaret's father died when she was four and, the eldest of three children, she was brought up by her struggling mother. Politics, she writes, ran in our bloodstream from my grandfather through my mother and on to her children, likewise from my paternal grandfather, a Sinn Féiner, through his son, an Irish home ruler, and so to us, to be merged into a potent mixture which was eventually to drive us 'politics mad' – impetus into strange places among alien people and in my case to bring me political disillusionment and despair which forced me into the necessity and effort of building for myself a new philosophy. This was to be at variance with the traditional Methodism of my mother's family, the careless Catholicism of my father and even, in the end, antagonistic to the materialist conception of history in which I became steeped in the days of my youth.

In 1927 at the age of 16 Margaret McCarthy joined the Accrington Weavers' Wipers and Washers Association. Soon

she was chosen to be part of the youth delegation which went to Russia for the 10th anniversary of the 1917 revolution. She had enrolled for classes at the local branch of the National Council of Labour Colleges, where her first tutor, who taught her economic geography, the theory of surplus value and the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system, was one A.L. Williams, later, as Len Williams, the long-serving national agent of the Labour Party, created governor of Mauritius by Harold Wilson.

On 29 October 1927 the delegations both youth and adult met on Tower Hill, London, where a farewell demonstration was held and the veteran Labour leader Tom Mann came down and boarded the Russian vessel *Soviet* which was moored at Free Trade Wharf "to carry us all away, and there kissed us a hilarious, beery Godspeed. At three o'clock next morning we sailed off to a Socialist new world, a land of gay enthusiasts. Will Lawther, then a young, laughing, handsome man, was the leader of the adult delegation. McKay grew up with the future trade union leaders: Will Lawther who, as the boss of the Durham miners, achieved fame by telling delegates of the Labour Party conference to shut their job was later Sir Will Lawther, one of the powerful knights of the TUC.

McKay was captivated by Russia at that time. The delegation was housed magnificently in one of the grand Leningrad hotels with enormous rooms, the inevitable stuffed bears and potted palms, and whisked off on the first evening to see the ballet *The Snow Maiden*. For McKay it was as if she had been conveyed straight into fairyland. She met Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, Madame Sun Yat-sen and Russians such as Rykov and Bukharin and the youth leaders Chaplin and Shatsky.

As a Member of Parliament in her fifties looking backwards to the 1920s and considering the social conditions of the times and the circumstances of her own life she did not see in all honesty what else she could have done other than rebel.



The woman on the Abu Dhabi omnibus: McKay on a British fact-finding mission to Jordan, at Allenby Bridge, 1970. Photograph: UPI

I did not want to be a rebel. I was a normal, life-loving young reefer, interested in fun, dancing, boys and art. I just wanted to live with all my being and to the full extent of my capacities but this was denied me. Therefore, in sympathy with the spirit of those years I was possessed by a frenzy for change; and since change, any change, could hardly be for the worse, the Communist Party embodied and symbolised the great changes, appeared as the instrument of it, pointed the way, even led us to audit, teaching us how, by revolutionising the economic pattern of society, we could solve the remainder of our problems and cure all the ills to which humanity, and particularly the workers, were subjected.

Her disenchantment with Communism began on a visit to Germany in 1929 as the guest of the Communist Young Red Freedom Fighters Association. In 1931 she left the Communist Party over their attitude to the National Socialists in Germany. She was president about this time as she was to be president 30 years later about the difficulties which would be caused by the Palestinians.

It would be a wrong impression to suppose that McKay was all about exotic foreign causes. In 1929 with the build of a bantamweight boxer she had been one of the leaders of the Bradford hunger march of the textile workers to London. In the Second World War she organised the Civil Service Clerical Association in Lancashire, vigorously persuading workers to do as much to win the war as she possibly could.

In 1951 she was appointed chief woman officer of the TUC, and her 1954 book *Women in Trade Union History* recalls how she and her friends used every device and ruse to approach Margaret Bondfield and Jennie Lee during the time of the 1950-51 Labour government. When she was elected MP for Clapham she pursued mainstream issues. Her maiden speech was made at 2.30am on 27 November 1964 in an adjournment debate on occupational hygiene service: "I will do my best to prove to the House that a new member can take

a hard day's night in the same spirit as any of the older members. I wish to draw to the notice of the House what lies behind the fact that 20 million working days are lost by workers suffering accidents and scheduled industrial diseases and that the position is not improving but is deteriorating."

Ernest Thornton, Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, praised her for a "truly remarkable maiden speech". A defining moment came when she was chosen as a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women at their conference in Tehran in 1965. From then on she devoted herself to Arab causes. I asked her whether as a gentle I could inquire as to whether she was anti-Semitic. McKay was furious, perhaps understandably. She was anti-Zionist, and that was a very different matter.

She had been elected for Clapham in 1964, defeating Dr Alan Glynn, later MP for Windsor, by 556 votes and winning against the late Ian Gow in 1966

by 4,176. However, by 1968, the Clapham press was referring to her as "the woman on the Abu Dhabi omnibus". MPs who "take up causes" have to be assiduous in looking after their own constituents and McKay was not. She was not re-elected for the 1970 general election. When Bill Shelton defeated the Labour candidate, the late Lord Peto.

She then went to live the next quarter-century of her life in Abu Dhabi, where Sheikh Zayed was kind and hospitable to her. Alex Kitson and I and her many friends prefer to remember her when she was a great force on the Left in the 1950s and early 1960s. I hope New Labour has room for latterday Margaret McKays.

Tam Dalyell
Margaret McKay (nee McCarthy); born Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire January 1911; chief woman officer, TUC 1951-62; MP (Labour) for Clapham 1964-70; married (one daughter); died Abu Dhabi 1 March 1996.



McKay campaigning in 1966

Photograph: Hulton Deutsch

Lyle Talbot

In 1980, when Michael and Harry Medved were preparing *The Golden Turkey Awards*, their book on cinema disasters, they conducted a poll to find "The Worst Film of All Time". Winner by a landslide was Edward D. Wood Jr's legendary cheapie *Plan 9 From Outer Space* (1956). Among the cast, which included a television psychic, a television late-night horror hostess and Wood's wife's chiropractor, one actor's performance stood out. In the brief role of a Pentagon general, Lyle Talbot actually surmounted the terrible dialogue, camerawork and direction to give the film's only professional actor since his teens. The veteran of over 200 films, he acted opposite such stars as Shirley Temple, James Cagney, Bette Davis, Ginger Rogers, Humphrey Bogart, Spencer Tracy, Al Jolson, Mac West, James Stewart, Danny Kaye, Ronald Colman, John Wayne and Marilyn Monroe.

He was born Lisle Henderson, the son of two actors who took him with them as they performed on Mississippi riverboats and in tent shows. When his mother died, Lisle went to live at a boarding house run by his maternal grandmother. Mary Talbot, whose surname he took, one of Mary's roommates, a magician who taught the 17-year-old Lisle hypnotism and sleight of hand. He soon made his stage debut as stooge for a vaudeville magician.

"Supposedly in a trance," he remembered, "I'd lie between

two chairs, with my head on one chair and my feet on the other. Then the man I worked for placed a big rock on my stomach and proceeded to break it with a hammer."

Talbot graduated from stooge to magician, and then to actor, appearing in stock companies in Iowa and Nebraska. In 1930 he formed his own stock company, also giving employment to his father and stepmother. The company closed with the advent of talking pictures, and Talbot tried his luck in New York.

In 1932 he and another struggling stage actor, Pat O'Brien, appeared in *The Nightingale*, a two-reel musical short, filmed at Warner Brothers' studio in Brooklyn, New York. Impressed, Warners gave him a screen test, and the result was a contract and the role of a dapper hoodlum in *Love is a Racket*. By now Talbot was in Hollywood where, between 1932 and 1937, he made an astonishing 43 feature films, plus two shorts. "It wasn't at all unusual to be working in two or three pictures at the same time," he recalled. These productions included *Big City Blues* and *Three on a Match* (both 1932, with Humphrey Bogart), *20,000 Years in Sing Sing* (1933, with Bette Davis and Spencer Tracy), *College Coach* (1933, with Dick Powell) and *Pat O'Brien* and *The Singing Kid* (1936, with Al Jolson). On loan-outs to other studios, he also appeared in *The 13th Guest* (1932, with Ginger Rogers), *One Night of Love* (1935, with Grace Moore) and *Go West*.



Talbot with Bette Davis in *Fog Over Frisco* (1934)

Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

Young Man (1936, with Mae West).

"In the theatre," said Talbot, "we'd arrive at five o'clock, and we were usually finished at eleven. We did the play and that was it. But in Hollywood, hours would work 12 to 14 hours, and get called back next morning." These conditions became so intolerable that, in 1937, Talbot and a handful of fellow players braved the threats of the studios and formed the Screen Actors Guild. Afterwards, relations between Talbot and a vengeful Warners deteriorated, and he left the studio.

For the next two decades, he appeared in such films as

Second Fiddle (1939, with Sonja Henie), *Up in Arms* (1944, with Danny Kaye), *Champagne for Caesar* (1950, with Ronald Colman), *The Jackpot* (1950, with James Stewart), *With a Song in My Heart* (1952, with Susan Hayward), *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954, with Ethel Merman, Dan Dailey, Marilyn Monroe and Donald O'Connor), and his last film, *Sunrise at Campobello* (1960, with Ralph Bellamy and Greer Garson). In addition to these important productions, there were scores of "B" films, six serials, and two other dire Edward D. Wood Jr films: *Glen or Glenda* (1952) and *Jail Bait* (1954).

Talbot also made many television appearances in such series as *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show*, *The Bob Cummings Show*, *The Munsters*, *The Dukes of Hazard* and *Elmer Fudd*.

In a recent interview, he admitted one regret: "I've never had a star on the Walk of Fame in Hollywood... There are lesser lights than I enshrined there."

Dick Vosburgh
Lyle Henderson (Lyle Talbot), actor; born Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 8 February 1912; married four times (four children); died San Francisco 3 March 1996.

Geoff Galwey

Geoff Galwey was a Dickensian figure whom Dickens, if writing about Irishmen, might have been proud to have invented. Born in 1912 in India, where his Dublin doctor father was serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps, Galwey joined the Navy at Dartmouth in 1926. After being in an aircraft which crashed on a carrier flight-deck he contracted rheumatic fever and was invalided out as a midshipman on disability retired pay.

He got a job selling space on the *Hardware Trade Journal*, but in 1935 joined Lovell & Rupert Curtis, a rare advertising agency which preferred to stay in Fleet Street and make advertising respectable. Galwey was the first person I ever met who was intellectually interested in selling. In 1936 he became a director of L&RC.

When the Second World War broke out he tried to join the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, but was turned down on medical grounds. He got a job as an engineer on A.P. Herbert's *Water Cipsy*. When Herbert declined to take *Bher Cipsy* to Dunkirk, Galwey and a shipmate, Ian Hassall, son of the Bohemian poster artist John Hassall, on their next leave offered themselves to the Admiralty and were given the job of collecting suitable craft for Dunkirk along the Essex coast and taking them to Dover. *Water Cipsy* stayed on the Thames.

By the time they reported to Dover, Dunkirk was over, but they were now effectively in the Navy. Galwey was appointed to

HMS *King Alfred* to be trained as a Sub-Lieutenant RNRV. The course always began with an inspection of each class by a lieutenant and petty officer of the Royal Navy. The two who inspected Galwey's class had been his shipmates at Dartmouth. The lieutenant did not move an eyelid when he stood in front of Galwey but at the end of the inspection he turned to his petty officer and said: "Did you see what I saw. Petty Officer Vass?" From then on Galwey was no longer treated as a student and received his commission as a sub-lieutenant in March. When someone in the Admiralty discovered that this newly appointed sub-lieutenant was also drawing a disability pension as a midshipman, there was trouble, but after protests and medical examinations he was passed for "Home, shore and harbour service only" – i.e. "You must not get wet, and then sue us for illness."

He was very soon appointed Flag Lieutenant to the Admiral Commanding Orkneys and Shetlands, and spent most of each day up to his neck in sea water training beach landing parties. In 1943 he was appointed to find and set up a base for training parties who were going to reconnoitre enemy-held beaches prior to an invasion. This he did and was appointed Training Officer, a job which included training in midge submarines. On D-Day, Galwey was in a pilot landing craft whose job was to locate the midge submarine posted off the beach to send signals to the

invasion force. This done, he and his assistant rating went ashore and acted as auxiliary beach-masters.

Earlier on the same morning, his peace-time friend and senior partner in the advertising agency, Rupert Curtis, had spearheaded the entire invasion, as Senior Officer of the Fleet of Landing Ships which took in Lord Lovell's Commando, and placed them on the correct beach at the correct time – an extraordinary, if minor coincidence.

The war over, Galwey returned to Lovell & Rupert Curtis, and in spare time wrote three novels, of which two, *Murder on Leave* (1947) and *The Lift and the Drop* (1948), were reprinted as Penguins; the third, *Full Fathom Five*, published in 1951, contains one of the best accounts of landing on the Normandy beaches ever published. He later wrote *Babel*, a large-scale biblical drama, launched in Canada and performed in 1970 in Ottawa and later at Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich, England. The Irish in Galwey regularly erupted in hilarity; there was a perpetual glint of humour in his eyes. In retirement he was lovingly looked after by his second wife, Joan, beside the sea at Walberswick in Suffolk.

Ruairi McLean
Geoffrey Valentine Galwey, advertising copywriter and novelist; born India 1912; married 1940; *See Miller* (dissolved 1946); 1951 Joan Skipsy (one son); died 17 January 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

SMITH: On 22 February to Jessica (nee Rainford) and Peter, a son, Alistair William Rainford, brother to Laurence.

DEATHS

HYDEN: John Sydney, tragically on 26 February 1996, whilst in St Peter's, Rosier, Belfast, hospital and on route of P&L and loving stepfather of Keith, Graeme and Heather. A service will be held in the Main Chapel at Warrenwood Crematorium, Edinburgh, on Friday 8 March at 12 noon, to which all friends are invited. No flowers please, but donations if so desired may be sent to the Moscow Leonard Cheshire Home c/o A. & W. Urquhart Solicitors, 10 Heriot Row, Edinburgh EH3 6HR. Although today you are far away, you'll be forever in my heart.

SEIGAL: Harry Charles, on 5 March 1996. Funeral at 3pm today at Western Cemetery, Chesham, Bucks. Prayers at 8pm tonight at home.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr M. Swallow and Miss S. Thompson

The engagement is announced between Mark, son of Mr and Mrs Charles Swallow of Wendlebury, Oxfordshire, and Sarah, eldest daughter of the late Lt-Col Colin Thompson OBE and Mrs Derek Inman, and stepdaughter of Derek Inman, of Shackleford, Surrey.

Birthdays

Dr Midge Adam, astronomer, 84; Miss Jean Bohl, actress, 60; Brigadier Michael Colvert, former SAS commander, 83; Mr William Davis, editor and publisher of *High Life*, 63; Miss Kiki Dee, rock singer, 49; Mr Donald Dixon MP, 67; Professor Sir Charles Frank, physicist, 85; Mr David Gilmore, rock guitarist, 65; Mr Richard Giordano, chairman, British Gas, 62; Sir Alistair Grant, chairman, Argyll Group, 59; Professor David Hendry, Professor of Economics, Oxford University, 52; Professor Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, former President, Wolfson College, Oxford, 73; Miss Judy Lee, actress, 49; Mr Loria

Mazeel, conductor, 66; Sir Hal Miller, former MP, 67; Mr Malcolm Moss MP, 53; Mr John Nokes, actor and television presenter, 67; Mr Richard Noble, world land speed record holder, 50; Mr Peter Roebuck, cricketer, 40; Sir Ian Dixon Scott, former ambassador, 87; The Right Rev David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool and former cricketer, 67; Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, operatic soprano, 52; Mlle Valentina Nikolayevna Treshkova, soprano, 59; Dr David Whitaker, chairman, J. Whitaker & Sons, 65; Miss Mary Wilson, singer, 52; Mrs Ann Winterford MP, 53; Sir Oliver Wright, former ambassador in Washington, 75.

Anniversaries

Births: Michelangelo (Michelagnolo Buonarroti), painter, sculptor and poet, 1475; Saravina Cyranovna Bergene, novelist and playwright, 1619; Francis Atterbury, prelate and writer, 1663; Elizabeth Barron Browning, poet, 1806; Joseph Schach, pianist and composer, 1812; George Louis Paley, mathematician, 1780; Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdyayev, philosopher and religious thinker, 1874; Bronson James Albery, theatrical manager,

1881; Adolfo Salazar, musicologist and composer, 1890; Lou Costello (Louis Francis Costello), actor and comedian, 1906; Frankie Howard (Francis Alex Howard), comedian, 1922; Dennis Francis Beaumont, playwright, 1616; Davy Crockett, frontiersman, killed at the Alamo 1836; William Whewell, philosopher and author, 1866; Artemus Ward (Charles Farrar Browne), humorist, writer, 1867; Peter von Cornelius, painter, 1839; Louis May Alcott, novelist, 1837; Gottlieb Daimler, mechanical engineer, 1900; William Worrell Mayo, a founder of the Mayo Clinic, 1911; John Edward Redmond, politician, 1928; Sir James Jebusa Shannon, painter, 1923; Alfred von Tirpitz, naval commander and statesman, 1930; John Philip Sousa, bandmaster and composer, 1932; Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, judge, 1935; John Guzzardo, La Motte Borglum, sculptor, 1941; Sir Halford John Macdowell, geographer, 1947; David Ivor Novello (Davies), composer and playwright, 1951; George Formby (William Hoy Booth), singer and comedian, 1951; King Paul I of the Hellenes, 1964; Zoltan Kodaly, composer, 1967; Pearl Buck (Sydenstricker), novelist, 1971; Donald Maclean, former diplomat and Soviet agent, 1953; Sir

Hugh Fraser, politician, 1984; Henry (Harry) Wilcoxon, film actor, 1984; Melina Mercouri (Amalia Maria Mercouri), Greek minister of culture and former actress, 1994. On this day: the Battle of Salvo and the Battle of the Alamo, Texas, ended, when there were only six survivors left of 155 Texans, 1836; Verdi's opera *La Traviata* was first performed, Venice 1853; the *Daily Chronicle* newspaper first published, 1871; Serbia was proclaimed a kingdom 1882; King Milan of Serbia abdicated, and his 13-year-old son Alexander succeeded to the throne, 1889; British soldiers were granted the right to wear spectacles on or off duty, 1902; the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon was destroyed by fire, 1926; frozen food was first put on sale by the Birdseye company, 1930; Stalin was granted the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union, 1943; the Allies took Cologne, 1945; Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast and Togoland) became independent, 1957; the US Air Force began daylight bombing raids on Berlin, 1944; Georgi Maksimilianovich Malenkov succeeded Stalin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, 1955. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Barred and Blifid, St Cadroe, St Chrodegang of Metz, St

Colette, Saints Cyneburga, Cyneswilde and Tibba, St Cyril of Constantinople, St Fridolin, St Olegarius or Odegar and Saints Perpetua and Felicity.

Lectures

National Gallery: Julie Barlow, "Cézanne (I): *Mont Sainte-Victoire*", 1pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Catherine Wilson, "Baroque Design in Continental Europe", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Eliza Adamowicz, "Surrealism: The Colour of Dreams", 1pm.

Slide Centre for the History and Theory of Art: Paul Moysart, "From the Thing to Elbise: the place of love of the neighbour in Lacan's *Seminar 17*", 6pm.

Dinners

Institute of Wastes Management: The annual presidential dinner of the Institute of Wastes Management took place yesterday evening in the Great Hall of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, London SW1. Mr John Birch, President of the Institute, was the host and the guest of honour was Mr Ed Gal-

Wills

Mrs Lynne Denise Ives, of Henley, Oxfordshire, the comedienne, actress and singer Marii Cain, left estate valued at £410,984 net.

Sir George Treacher Cox, of London SW7, Director and Secretary of the Victoria and Albert Museum 1956-66, left estate valued at £616,226 net.

The Hon Ursula Constance Wyndham, of Perth, West Sussex, the journalist and writer, left estate valued at £894,387 net.

Air Marshal Sir John Hugh Lapsley, of Aldeburgh, Suffolk, former head of the British Defence Staff, left estate valued at £265,325 net.

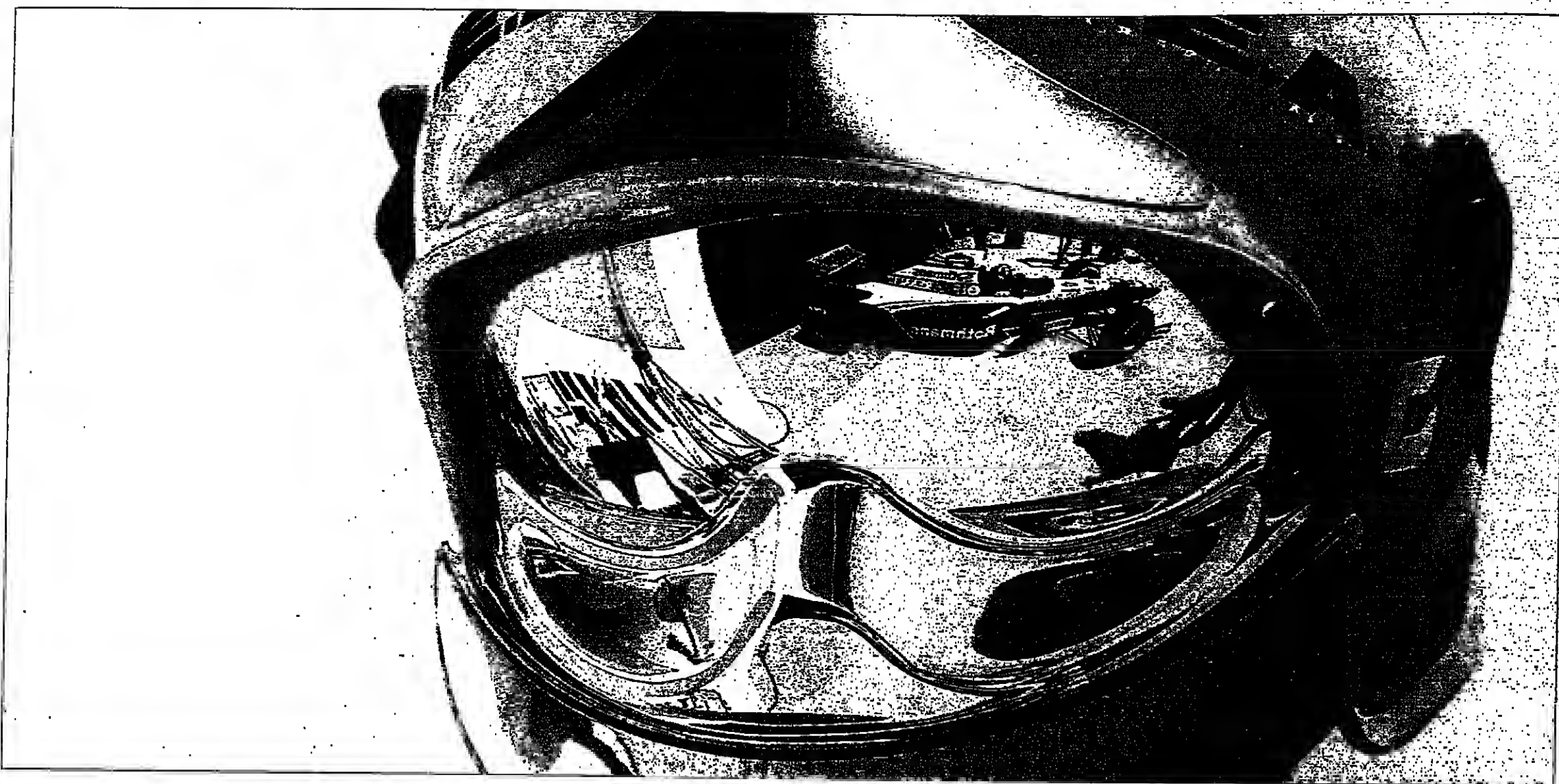
ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
The Duke of Edinburgh attends the closing ceremony of the British Lands with Argentina through Falkland Islands at the Residence of the Argentine Ambassador in London SW1. The Princess of Wales, at London, visits the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, London WC1. The Princess Royal, President British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, visits Emma, Morden, Surrey; at Farnham, British Knitting Foundation, Surrey; at Farnham, National Association of Children's Advice Bureaux, opens new premises, for Chesham and Hock; at Chesham, Surrey; as President, Saves the Children Fund, attend a private Appeal Dinner at Buckingham Palace, France, Margaret, Honorary President, the British Museum Development Trust, attends a Dinner held at the Beverly Hills Hotel, Los Angeles.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1pm. 7 Company, Coldstream Guards, mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, bond provided by the Scots Guards.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010. Charges are 25.00 a line (VAT extra).

THE INDEPENDENT

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car



Gerhard Berger is widely considered to be the smoothest and most consistent driver in Formula One. His team mate Jean Alesi is cited as the quicker driver, yet Berger started ahead of him in more races in 1995. However, last season



Berger's luck was generally appalling, exemplified at Monza where he would have won, were he not hit by the camera from Alesi's car. This season driving the Benetton-Renault he will be a formidable force.

Formula One Dream Team is just like Fantasy Football: you pick and manage your dream grand prix team to score points over the coming season. Pit your wits against other enthusiasts and you could win our overall 1996 champion's prize, a drive in a Formula One car plus additional prizes for each race.

Individual race prizes range from trips to major grands prix, including this year's British Grand Prix at Silverstone, to a day at the Nigel Mansell Racing School at Brands Hatch. Your team must comprise three drivers, a chassis and an engine; your budget is £40 million. Make your selections from the grand prix shopping list printed below; the only restriction is that your third driver must come from the £1 million category.

Details of how to enter are given on this page. You can enter a team at any point during the grand prix season but the earlier you enter, the greater your chances of being our overall champion. Remember, there are prizes for the winning Dream Team in each individual grand prix so you can enter a different team for each race.

HOW YOU SCORE

Points are awarded per race to the top six finishers, based on the Formula One World Championship points scoring system (10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) but

with an extra 10 points awarded to each of the top six finishers. All drivers are eligible to score for a top six finish but can also notch up extra points as follows:

- The fastest driver in race-day warm-up will collect six points, with five for the second and so on down to one point for the sixth quickest.

- Drivers score one point for each place they make up over their grid position. Points are not deducted by losing places.

- Five points are lost if your driver posts first retirement, four for second down to one point lost for the fifth retirement.

- If your driver makes the quickest pitstop (from the entry of the pitlane to the exit) you gain five points.

- If your driver sets the fastest lap time in the race, you gain five points.

- If your driver receives a stop-go penalty, you lose five points.

- If your driver starts on pole position, you gain five points.

- The Independent will name a Driver Of The Day after each race for a particularly impressive performance, worth five points.

- Non-qualification for a grand prix loses you two points. If a driver is on the FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost.

- Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores



DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 1996 Formula One car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most outstanding experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day of F1 and other single seat cars.

AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points following the Australian Grand Prix on 10 March will win a day-out at Silverstone with the Jordan grand prix team and drivers Rubens Barrichello and Martin Brundle. You will also have a unique behind-the-scenes look at the team, spending the day in the pits and having lunch with the team.

no points.

- Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.

- Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.

HOW TO ENTER

Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million. Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there in this year's Formula One World Championship? To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods.

Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a non-tone phone and give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year. In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you will be asked for your

name, address and telephone number. Your team selections plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number. This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

CHECKING YOUR SCORE

You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times, with a typical call to secure your entry lasting between five and seven minutes.
2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.
3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.
4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Plc, Haymarket Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.
5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK.
6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.
7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear no relation to real life.

Make your selection from the Grand Prix

DRIVERS

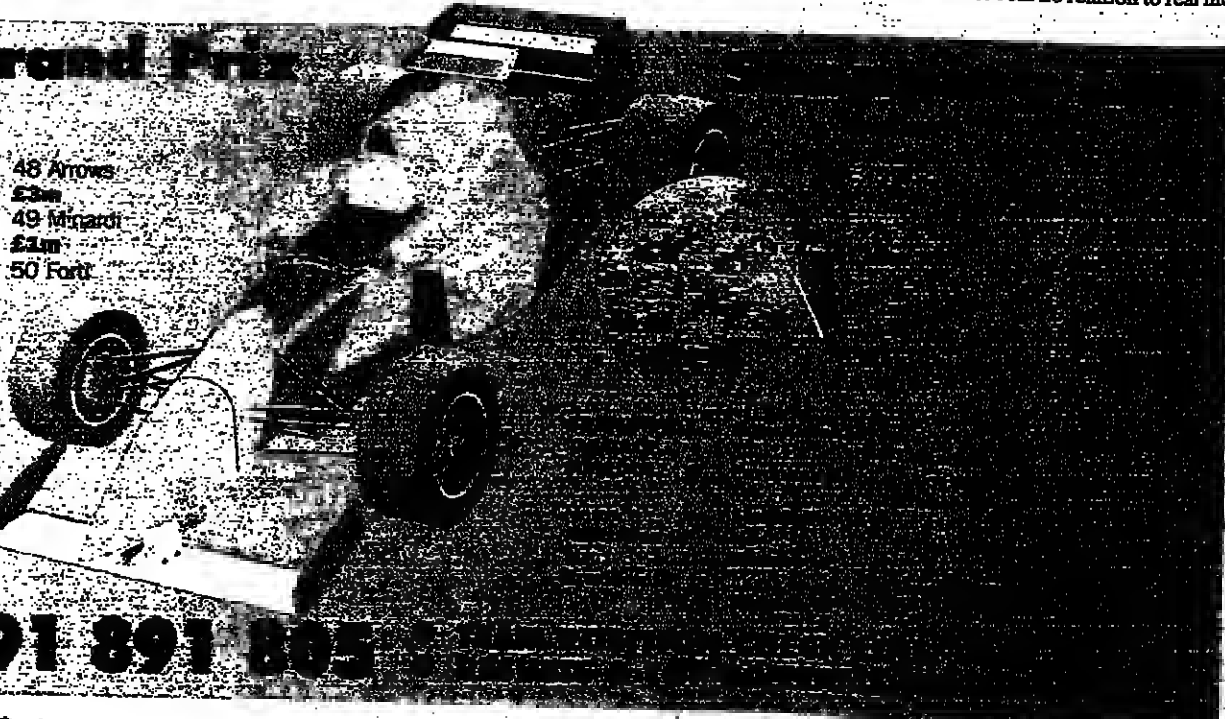
£25m
1 M. Schumacher
£23m
2 J. Alesi
£20m
3 D. Hill
£18m
4 G. Berger
£16m
5 D. Coulthard
£14m
6 E. Irvine
£12m
7 J. Villeneuve
£10m
8 M. Hakkinen
£8m
9 H. H. Frenzen
£6m
10 M. Brundle
£4m
11 R. Barrichello

£3m
12 J. Herbert
£2m
13 M. Salo
£1m
14 P. Larri
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15 P. Diniz
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16 U. Katayama
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17 J. Verstappen
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18 Q. Paris
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19 L. Badoer
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20 R. Rosset
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21 A. Montemini
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22 G. Fisichella
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23 V. Sospin
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33 N. Fontana
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34 D. Franchitti
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36 J. Magnussen
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DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805

هكذا ناس الأهل

It took them a week to threaten a peace process which took years to build. **John Lichfield** profiles the group putting terror into the heart of Israel

Who are Hamas?

What is Hamas?

It is a militant Islamic movement, with political and military wings, which aims to create an Islamic state in the pre-Second World War "mandate" territory of Palestine, in other words the whole of present-day Israel plus Gaza and the West Bank. Its name is an acronym of the first letters of the Arabic words for Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas also means "zeal".

Where did it come from?

Hamas grew from the grass-roots Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories in the 1980s (the intifada). Its inspiration came from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. It was founded by a paraplegic fundamentalist cleric, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, in the Gaza Strip in 1987. Sheikh Yassin is serving a life sentence in Israel for political violence. Hamas grew from a dissatisfaction with the strategy of the mainstream Palestinian political leadership, grouped in Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organisation.

There is some evidence that, in its earliest days, Hamas was fostered by Israel to undermine Mr Arafat and to divert support from the radical Marxist groups like the Popular Front and the Democratic Front, which were then in vogue. Since the signing of the outline peace agreement between the PLO and Israel in 1993, Hamas has been the main focus of the dissident – or in Middle East jargon, "rejectionist" – Palestinian forces.

What does Hamas want?

An Islamic state on the Iranian model. It rejects the Israeli-Palestinian peace process as a surrender to Zionism, which it sees as an alien and racist force, underwritten by western imperialism. Some Hamas officials have spoken in more conciliatory terms of accepting a peace settlement in "stages", but it is unclear what it means by that.

What is the aim of the latest bombing campaign?

To win the May Israeli election for a right-wing coalition led by Likud. Each bomb has knocked several percentage points off the poll lead of the Labour-led government of Shimon Peres. Each blast has eaten away at the hopes of the ordinary non-political Israeli that peace with Arafat would bring security. If the uncompromising Likud does win – as now seems extremely likely – the peace process will be halted and conceivably put into reverse.

Is the bombing the work of a splinter group, or Hamas itself?

It is hard to be absolutely sure. The military wing of Hamas – the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades – have been calling for a truce. The group admitting responsibility for the bombings, the Disciples of Yehiya Ayyash, have rejected any cessation of violence. According to Israeli TV, the orders for the bombings came from Hamas leaders in Syria, not the West Bank or Gaza. One possibility is that the core Hamas leadership is behind the bombings, but is pretending not to be.

Why do that?

To avoid the crackdown on its peaceful and military activities which Israelis are urging Yasser Arafat to undertake. The other possibility is that there is a fissure within the movement. On one side are those who wish to kill the peace process, on the other side are those who argue that this would be suicide bombing on a grand scale, as the ultimate victims would be the Hamas movement itself, as well as peace.

So who is in charge of Hamas?

No one is sure. With Sheikh Yassin in prison, the movement is thought to be controlled by a highly secretive executive committee of uncertain number. The military wing is thought to be organised in a number of semi-autonomous cells. Hamas has a public face, which organises its education and welfare programmes, but that does not give much of a clue to its real leaders, some of whom are undoubtedly abroad.

What help does Hamas get from outside?

It is difficult to pinpoint how much, and from whom. Syria, at the very least, allows Hamas leaders and radio stations to operate from its territory, but then Hamas leaders are also believed to operate from Jordan, which supports the peace process. The usual presumption is that Hamas is supported from Iran. But Hamas is a Sunni Muslim movement and Iran Shia.

Iran is thought to give its practical help mostly to a sister, but rival organisation, Islamic Jihad. (According to some Middle East experts, however, Islamic Jihad is just another of the hydra heads of the amorphous Hamas). Some financial support for Hamas came from Saudi Arabia but this may have reduced in recent years. Hamas fighters have also received military training in Sudan. But, supreme irony of ironies, most of the cash which sup-

ports Hamas now may come from the Palestinian diaspora in America, also the main banker to Israel.

What sort of people support Hamas?

The devout, the dispossessed and the disaffected. Hamas funds Gaza and some West Bank cities a useful recruiting ground for young people seeking opportunities in suicidal fanaticism. But its growing strength also reflects the turn away from secularism by Palestinians of all social groups in the last 20 years and the rediscovery of Islam as a symbol of national identity. Many middle-class professionals support Hamas and fill the ranks of its political leadership. The political wing of Hamas also runs – very efficiently – a range of Islamic institutions from kindergartens and schools to charities. It is these activities, which offer the promise of a more Islamic future, which the more cautious Hamas minds may be reluctant to place at risk through a bombing campaign.

How strong is Hamas politically?

It is generally accepted that about 15 to 20 per cent of the population of Gaza and the West Bank supports Hamas (proportionally more in Gaza, where economic conditions are more deplorable). Although Hamas did not officially take part in the Palestinian elections in January, it did support some candidates and generally they were successful.

And militarily?

The strength of the "military" units of Hamas is the subject of feverish conjecture (not least in the Israeli security services). A campaign of suicide bombing requires little more than quantities of Semtex and an endless supply of young "martyrs".

Could Yasser Arafat do more to prevent the bombings?

Yes, probably, but at a price which might be just as destructive, in the long term, to the prospects of a lasting peace. He could crush Hamas in the short term by imposing the kind of police state familiar elsewhere in the Middle East (Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia spring to mind). But he might have to fight a Palestinian civil war to do so, triggering a new spiral of bitterness among young militants opposed to the peace.

What can Israel do?

Israel is already the most security-conscious democratic nation on earth. There is little more that can be done to stop suicide attacks on buses, other than permanently seal-

ing Israel's borders with Gaza and the West Bank, causing huge economic disruption. The Peres government has warned that it might take direct action against Hamas inside the West Bank and Gaza. This would strike at the heart of the authority granted to the fledgling Palestinian government and, conceivably, provoke fighting between Israeli and Arafat forces.

Will there be more bombs?

One theory is that these are revenge attacks for the assassination on 5 January by Israeli security services of Yehiya Ayyash, the Hamas master-bomber known as the "engineer".

But if that were the aim why would there be four bombs?

The suspicion of Middle East experts is that this is not just a revenge attack; it is more strategic. The possibility opens up that the bombing may continue, intermittently, over the next 11 weeks or until the Peres government grows desperate and takes direct action within Gaza and the West Bank, placing the whole peace process in jeopardy.

So is the Middle East peace doomed?

Maybe. It is certainly facing its bloodiest and most politically agonising test. It would be wrong to underestimate the amount of political capital invested in Middle East peace: by the Peres government; by the Israeli and Palestinian peoples; by Mr Arafat; by President Clinton. Although a patchwork, unsatisfactory peace, it is more blast-proof than it seems. But it is not necessarily robust enough to withstand an unholy alliance between the Israeli right and Islamic fundamentalism.



DIARY

They don't want our money

When will the poll tax débacle come to an end? Five years after its abolition, the dreaded charge is still managing to provoke some of the silliest sagas ever seen in our courts. Last week a Manchester man, Ian Ransom, tried three times to pay five years' of arrears – and was rejected each time.

The problem? He was paying in £290 of winnings from the amusement arcade in Blackpool's tourist site, the Golden Mile, in 5,800 five-pence pieces, weighing more than three and a half stone. The debt collectors are highly un-amused. According to an obscure coinage act of 1971, only £5 worth of five and 10 pence coins may be accepted. The agency is therefore still waiting for Mr Ransom to exchange his winnings at the bank – but they could be in for a long wait.

Ransom, who is by now immune to the threat of court action, is most reluc-

tant to exchange his coins. "I carted that bag all the way back from Blackpool," he says, "and the first two times I took it in they were, frankly, very unpleasant. I don't know why they won't take it – I'm even offering more than I owe. My debt's only £289.50.... I'm not lugging the damn thing around any more."

His attitude, alas, cuts no ice with the collectors. "People had better think twice before they try and be silly and muck us around," warned an emotional spokesman. "You get people trying to write cheques to clear debts on banana skins and all sorts – we're not having it."

Any Peugeot so long as it's red ...

The new Peugeot 406 commercial, which has caused a bit of a rumpus with the Independent Television Commission because of its man-on-man kiss-of-life scene, has driven into yet more controversy. The pop star Mike Pickering of

M People, whose song "Search for the Hero", currently in the top five in the charts, accompanies the ad, is still – after several weeks – awaiting delivery of his free, complimentary Peugeot Cabriolet. If that were not enough to irritate him, it now seems he won't get either of the colours he asked for (first choice, black; second, maroon). He has just heard, when it finally arrives, that it will be in something called Diablo Red.

"Doesn't that mean Red Devil?" he fumes down the phone. It will be a brave Peugeot executive who faces Mr Pickering in this mood. "At first I was saying, 'Good old Peugeot'," he tells me, "but now maybe I should just torch the car when it arrives."

Mrs Merton's only joking, geddit?

It would appear that Caroline Hook's trademark – the deadpan double enten-

dre – is somewhat wasted on the very people who are on the receiving end of it. Last week the comedian (below, as Mrs Merton and herself) rang the office of Will Wyatt, BBC managing director, to accept his invitation to Almtree for this year's Grand National. Both times she said the same thing and both times



Mr Wyatt's secretary slammed the phone down. Her exact words? "Hello. I want to be in Mr Wyatt's box."

Slam from the other end. Clearly, assumed the secretary, here is some innuendo-harassing senior BBC executive.

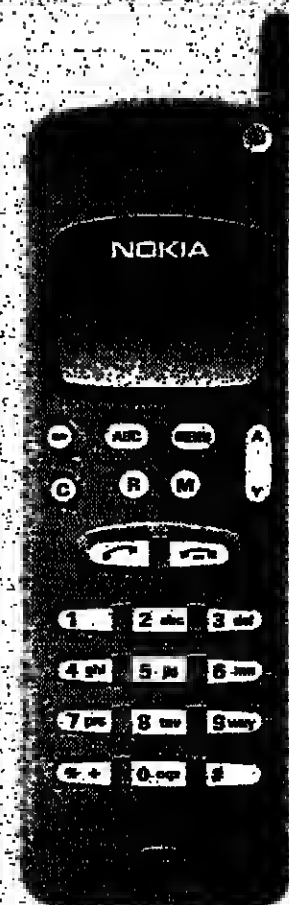
Now, of course, that the mistake has come to light, the BBC is not tremendously proud of it. Ms Hook's friend and scriptwriter, Craig Cash, has done his best to explain the incident, however. "She just gets a bit flustered on the phone," he says. "Exactly what I thought."

A case of more braun than brain ...

Officials of the Cambridge Union Society might have been expected to be in favour of last week's motion: "This House believes brain is more important than brawn." Their letter inviting the chess grandmaster Nigel Short to speak at the debate, however, suggests that their own intellectual credentials fall somewhat short of a full endorsement of the motion. They spell the final word as "braun".

Eagle Eye

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Shaken and stirred by dashing de la Billière

Forget Pierce Brosnan, he has been supplanted in the hearts of London's twentysomethings by the discovery of a real James Bond among their peer group, Edward de la Billière (right), 25-year-old son of General Sir Peter, the former British Commander-in-Chief in the Gulf.

Edward has obviously learnt a trick or two from Daddy. He recently gave a lecture at the Royal Geographical Society about the expedition he made last summer up Mount McKinley, Alaska's tallest mountain. He and a friend climbed with Sgt Alan Perrin, who is blind and half-paralysed, having been blown up by a mine on an army exercise on Salisbury plain. Edward decided that his lecture needed spicing up. "We staged a mini-explosion and Alan absented in from the roof. I don't think anything like it has ever happened at the RGS before," he tells me proudly.

I, along with London's female population, apparently, am impressed. The only sadness is that he tells me he has now got to go up climbing mountains and be a lawyer instead. Shame.



25.3.96

THE INDEPENDENT

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The hole at new Labour's heart

People imagine that a team of bright researchers writes Tony Blair's speeches defining the appeal of new Labour. It's a myth. The truth is that a computer whizz in the party's new communications centre developed an easy-to-use programme so that speeches on most subjects can be run off endlessly. The programme has five steps. Yesterday it was used to full effect in Mr Blair's attempt to recast Labour as the party of the home-owner.

Step One: Once We Were Great. Labour was right in the past – in this case with its post-war slum clearance and house-building programme – but it lost the plot.

Step Two: A Nod to Mrs Thatcher. She exposed our weakness, in the case of housing, by championing the home-owner and introducing the right to buy for council tenants.

Step Three: The Tories Let You Down. Instead of the promised land of home-ownership, the Government has brought you negative equity and rising repossessions.

Step Four: Sensible Stuff About Partnerships. This involves borrowing Tory policies (the ones that have not failed) and laying claim to initiatives voluntarily undertaken by the private sector, such as schemes to make it easier for people to pay mortgages when they are out of work, mixing renting and owning, and leasehold reform. Councils should work with private sector lenders, tenants and housing associations to create more socially owned housing for rent. All very grown-up, but "The middle classes need better mortgage advice!" is a hardly a rallying call for the disoriented. So...

Step Five: The Big Message. This policy – housing yesterday, but it could apply to schools, nuclear weapons or multi-storey car parks – is a case study of One Nation-Stakeholderism in action. Not catchy, but the One Nation bit takes us on to the centre ground the Tories are deserting, while Stakeholderism is the still-evolving idea to reconcile efficiency and social justice in a world where the global market is far more powerful than the state.

It's all fine, as far as it goes, and it is certainly a long way from where Labour was even a few years ago. The trouble is that almost two years into Mr Blair's leadership the Labour Party still isn't going far

enough. Leaders are successful when they have a compelling story to tell, which explains to electors what is wrong with their country, prescribes policies to put things right and inspires people to carry them out. Mr Blair's problem is that his story is often blurred and as yet is uninspiring. He has taken strides in the right direction, but it is still unclear what role he would give the state and what scope there would be for choice, competition and individual initiative.

On housing, Mr Blair could have told one of at least two big stories. The first would have been to launch a national programme to rid us of negative equity through a state sponsored bail-out to get the market moving again, including increasing Miras and reinstating government programmes to help people to pay their mortgage if they lose their job.

The second story would take us in the opposite direction, to take this historic opportunity of low inflation and low house prices to relinquish the home-owning ideal. Mr Blair could have urged us to become more European, to start renting, to learn to save and to invest in business rather than property. He could have attacked the mortgage as a noose around our necks. In an era of increasingly insecure employment, renting provides the flexibility a 25-year mortgage lacks. Cut-throat competition in the mortgage market could be encouraging people to take on commitments they cannot meet and so simply storing up financial disasters in years to come.

Both these approaches have drawbacks. A negative equity bail-out would be costly, probably unfair and may not work. Urging us to rent more would have seemed like turning his back on millions of actual and aspirant homeowners, not good politics. So we are left in a muddle in the middle with Mr Blair offering to clean up Tory messes using a mixture of policies borrowed from all over the place. Sometimes, on education and railways, they are not coherent; sometimes, on housing and the environment, they are not compelling. Mr Blair can win the election without having a Big Story to tell us. He may govern moderately well. But he will not lead Britain on a wave of modernisation. For that he needs something more than he has yet delivered.

A fishy triumph for Britain

Yesterday's decision to let Spanish fishermen sue Britain for banning them from our fishing grounds looks like nonsense. The ruling, from the European Court of Justice, means that Britain cannot in practice protect the fishing quotas allotted to British fishermen. Fleets from other countries, notably the Spanish, are free to register themselves here and then fish against the British quota.

The quota system, established under the Common Fisheries Policy, has been made to look absurd. This is bad news for the British fishing industry, which is already much diminished by the small size of the quotas available to this country. Ministers must now agree quickly at a European level to close the loophole that the Spanish fleets have so deftly exploited.

But before joining the Euro-sceptic rant against the European Court and all its works, it is worth examining this judgment. The principle upheld by yesterday's ruling, far from representing a British defeat, is a victory for the ideals of free

trade. The creation of a single market has been Britain's main aim within the European Union. The Government has fought for British business to be allowed to operate anywhere in the EU, on the terms enjoyed by indigenous competitors. The 1992 Maastricht treaty reflected British thinking when it gave the European Court powers to outlaw protectionism imposed by member states.

This is precisely what the court did yesterday, when it opened the way for Spanish fishermen to claim compensation for the British ban on their entering the market. In another judgment, it ruled against German attempts to keep foreign beers out of its markets. Fishing quotas, allotted according to nationality, should now be exempted from these single market rules: otherwise the quota system becomes meaningless. But once that is done, Britain should celebrate, rather than bemoan, the European Court's robust attitude towards stamping out protectionism in the European Union.



"I'm sure we've made the right decision, don't you darling?"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brum, a dump but no sump

Sir: As one raised in the Birmingham area, with the flat vowels to prove it, might I congratulate Jonathan Glancy on his tremendous demolition job on Birmingham as a potential site for the Millennium Exhibition ("No one loves a conurbation", 4 March). Yes, Birmingham is a dump. But London's a dump as well. In fact the proposed site at Greenwich is a sump in a dump. So we still should have got it. Sour grapes play no part in this.

JOHN HIRST
Smethwick

Sir: Jonathan Glancy commented on the "fuming motorways" surrounding my home. Well, London has its own ring road, the M25, and I have spent many an hour fuming at being stuck on it, not to mention the rest of London's decrepit road system.

If I were to make a choice between visiting the National Exhibition Centre, convention centre and national indoor arena, all of which have excellent access and facilities, or a site which has to be first decontaminated, then I would not be going to London.

NICK PHILLIPS
Castle Bromwich, Birmingham

Sir: On a sunny winter's day, walk out of Paradise Forum and across the pedestrian bridge towards Centenary Square and look at the side of the Hyatt. There you will see a reflection of the Central TV tower in the hotel's glass facade. These two buildings have been so placed that the reflection of the one on the other creates a magnificent galleon, complete with billowing sails, floating above the city.

I like Birmingham.

EMMELINE STEVENSON
Pencilland, East Lothian

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Whitehall ideal of public service under attack

Sir: Dame Gillian Brown and Fergus Allen (Letters, 2 and 4 February) have rightly criticised the Government's plan to privatise the agency that recruits civil servants. May I add my voice to theirs?

Nowadays, the concept of public service seems to have few advocates in Government circles and a Civil Service selected on merit by fair and open competition is, one fears, soon to be a thing of the past. Those who are out of sympathy with what they regard as "outmoded" ideas will, no doubt, argue that it is more efficient for the private sector to recruit the future Civil Service, and that the merits of the present system will be preserved at cheaper cost.

I am afraid that some of us who were at one time involved with the recruitment system will have doubts whether this is so. It was felt necessary for the Queen and not, let it be noted, the government of the day to appoint the First Civil Service Commissioner with direct responsibility for ensuring that only the best were chosen for the Civil Service and by processes which were under his control and were free from nepotism.

This was at a time when the

concept of public service was not under attack. Now these functions are to fall to private recruitment agencies operating for private profit. How much more necessary is it to retain in the public sector, and subject to appropriate safeguards, the recruitment of civil servants when the concept of public service is no longer respected?

D J TREVELYAN
Mansfield College, Oxford
The writer was First Civil Service Commissioner, 1983-89

Sir: It is something to learn from Dame Gillian Brown's letter (2 March) that the House of Lords is to debate later this week the bizarre move to sell off the agency that recruits, among others, fast-stream civil servants. The House of Commons dog has failed to bark in the night and the low-key, ie surreptitious, announcement of the plan by answer to a Written Question on November 23 has limited discussion anywhere else.

The reasons given by the Office of Public Service (itself similarly due for liberation from its constraints) are half-baked

and unconvincing. And there seems to have been no process of consultation before a change of historic, even constitutional, significance. I suppose that this would have delayed the doctrinaire advance of privatisation. How contemptuously we are treated now!

SIR DEREK MITCHELL
London SW15
The writer was Second Permanent Secretary, HM Treasury, 1973-77

Sir: Dame Gillian Brown (Letters, 2 March) states that "the Government has advanced no specific criticism of the Recruitment and Advisory Service: so why dismantle it?"

She misses the whole point of the approach to government by the present administration. It goes something like this: "If it ain't broke (eg British Telecom) fix it; if it's broke (eg British Rail) don't fix it; and if you're not sure whether it's broke or not (eg the NHS) pull the rug on it!"

For the Government this may seem like good governance but if you're one of the governed you need a wonderful sense of humour.

DR BERNARD COLEMAN
Peterborough

Religion has no place in schools

Sir: There is a fairly simple answer to Paul Valley's difficulties ("How much intolerance can we tolerate?", 4 March) over religion and morals in schools. It is the American one. Religious beliefs are a private question: schooling is a matter of public policy; the two should be kept separate. Religious and moral teaching must be left to the family and church (or mosque, synagogue, temple).

The immediate, wholly desirable consequence is the abolition of that prime disaster area in our schools, the compulsory, "act of worship". The second consequence, more long-term, would be the revision of the status of church schools. This would doubtless be vigorously resisted, at least at first, by conservatives, but the only coherent alternative

in a multi-faith society is to allow any religious grouping with sufficient supporters and funds the same status. Conservatives would probably come round to the view that the relinquishing of the status was after all the lesser evil.

Would such divorce of our schools from inculcation of "faith and morals" expose the "quagmire of relativism" which Mr Valley presents as the nemesis of bankrupt liberalism? Liberalism is not without values; among them are open discussion and openness to the depth and diversity of religious and moral teaching. These values would be best served by ending our historic, Christian-biased and now hopelessly unserviceable confusion of private religion with public education.

D B NEMMO
Wolverhampton

Why Blimps fear military gays

Sir: As the debate over gays in the armed forces continues ("Soames pledges to defend forces' ban on gays", 5 March) the arguments put forward by those against would indicate a serious lack of character among the personnel of Her Majesty's armed forces. There are, always have been and always will be gays in the services. The argument is as to whether people should be permitted to be "open" about their homosexuality.

One main argument against is that it would lead to a breakdown in discipline. Has any such breakdown been observed in the armed forces of those countries such as Australia and Holland, where gays are allowed to serve? Are we to assume that the personnel of HM forces are too immature and uncertain about their own sexuality to cope?

Finally, it is the great conceit of heterosexual men that gays are "after them". They can rest assured that this is a fallacy, the vast majority of gay men are just not interested in them.

I suspect that opposition to gays comes from the blimpish old guard who remain at the top at the MoD. The younger generation are far too well adjusted and comfortable with their sexuality to perceive any threat from working alongside gays.

ROBERT READMAN
Sandbanks, Dorset

Royal Collection belongs to us

Sir: Jennifer Miller is quite mistaken in thinking that the few items on view in various places from the Royal Collection (Letters, 4 March) is in any way adequate; may I remind her that the vast majority of the "Royal" collection belongs to the state. We are the state. The whole collection should be available to everyone for viewing.

We are not all in the fortunate position of being able to afford to get into such "bastions of culture" as Hampton Court and Windsor Castle. All "royal" residences charge exorbitant entrance prices.

MARK LLEWELLYN
London SW1

Military types and their camp followers

Well, do you think that homosexuals should be allowed to join the British armed services? I have received an enormous mailbag on the subject and bring you some of the best letters today.

From Major John "Terry" Terrier, retd.

Sir, I remember when I was in the desert in the war, we often got worried about one of our number called Sidney "Sidi" Bryant. It was quite common for us chaps to have photos of stars on our kit cupboard doors, but he had a portrait of General Rommel stuck to his. Now, Rommel was an OK guy as Nazis went, but most of us had Allied faces on our pin-ups and female faces at that, so one day we said to Sidi, "How come Rommel?" or words to that effect. And he said, "You want me to stick up a picture of Vera Lynn instead? What do you think I am? Some kind of pervert or something?" I often wonder what he meant by that.

Yours etc.

From Captain Frederick "Fred" Palmouth

Sir, I was in the Salvation Army for many years, rising to the rank of captain before I was invalided out in 1981 after being struck by a doughnut during the Totnes Christmas Women's Institute riots of that year, but that's another story, and I cannot remem-



MILES KINGSTON

ber anyone ever bothering about our sexual orientation. I remember once Colonel Thomas "Tambourine" Tinnah saying to me, "You may hear people mock our uniform, Frieda, but General Booth knew what he was doing when he designed it. He knew that nobody would ever fancy anyone in a Salvation Army uniform and there would be no hanky panky. Care for a drink, dear?" And he was right and there never was any hanky panky, although the Salvation Army was integrated long before the British Army or the Church of England. come to that, so men and women were rubbing shoulders together in the Sally Army years ago, so to speak, and there was plenty of opportunity, as I well remember, but that's another story, and so is the reason that Tommy called me Frieda and not Freddy.

Yours etc.

From Major-General Arthur "Artie" Cruwell

Sir, I think everyone is asking the wrong question. They shouldn't be asking whether gays should be allowed in the Army and Navy. They should be asking whether heterosexuals should be allowed in. After all, it's the straight that cause all the trouble, all the Saturday night drinking and woman-chasing and whoring and fighting – and that's just peace-time! Who do you think declares all the actual wars and enjoys all the Rambo war stuff? Not gays, that's for sure. Gays have far too much taste to get mixed up in serious carnage. Carnage is not style, sweetie. In any case, if you ban gays from the services, who do you think is going to put on all the shows and bring a modicum of artistry to these otherwise dreadful institutions. Have you seen the Cenotaph? Heavens, what a mess. Have you looked at those uniforms? Too, too dreadful.

Yours etc.

From Mrs Ninette "Ninny" Carstairs

Sir, Incidentally, why do we always begin letters to the paper with the word "Sir"? What happens if the editor is a woman? Stick that in your pipe and smoke it!

But the reason I wrote was to say that I have no experience of Army life

except through the world of art, and recently I was taken to see a revival of *Pravins on Parade*, and well! All I can say is that if that is anything like the real Army, there weren't any heterosexuals in it at all – they were all "bumboys", to use the inelegant phrase tossed around by Peter Nichols's characters!

The play depicts Army life in Malaya in about 1948. Now, as I recall, homosexuality was illegal in England in those days, so every relationship portrayed on stage was against the law. Would it not be possible even now to prosecute Mr Nichols for portraying illegal acts and inciting young men to wish they had done the same in 1948?

PS. Why do we use the phrase "stick that in your pipe and smoke it"? It is a very male-oriented phrase. So stick that in your handbag and lose it! Yours etc.

From General Sir Oscar Tango

Sir, I object to all the easy stereotypes depicted in these letters. Oh yes, it's all too easy to make the usual camp jokes, but we soldiers are just as much individuals as anyone else, and to dismiss us as butch, testosterone-filled macho killers is plain silly.

Got you there, didn't I? You thought I was going to talk about gay stereotypes, didn't you? Well, that proves my point. Whatever it was. Yours etc.

The menace of power lines

Sir: Tim Dennis points out that we need not worry about the high voltage in our television sets because it is DC (Letters, 4 March). The point I was hoping to make was that we get very worried about high voltages when the wires are visible, but do not when they cannot be seen.

The evidence of any link between leukaemia and electromagnetic fields is slender. But that does not mean high-voltage power lines are nice neighbours. No one so far seems to have thought of the psychological effects of these things.

High-voltage lines create a feeling of menace. Some people find the march of the towers across the landscape menacing. The crackle of leaking electricity is audible in wet weather. Children have to be warned that they must never get near them. What happens if a wire breaks and comes down across the house?

High voltage lines may not be the direct cause of illness, but they cause a degree of fear in those who have to live under them. It is time that was recognised.

DR ARTHUR TARRANT
Twickenham, Middlesex

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The lessons of a double tragedy

Caroline Beale was the victim of mental illness and a system that put politics ahead of justice

If the tragic case of Caroline Beale illustrates one thing, it is how little we know about mental disease and how easy it is for psychiatric illness to be misrepresented as evil intent. And that is doubly true of such illnesses during pregnancy.

Caroline Beale returns home tomorrow without having to face a further stretch in jail but she carries the stigma of a felon. To secure her release she had to plead guilty to manslaughter despite the expert diagnoses of world-renowned psychiatrists who said she was very sick when her newborn baby died in a New York hotel room. She was arrested in September 1994 as she boarded a plane bound for the UK. The dead baby's body was inside a shoulder bag. Two days later she was charged with murder. She spent eight months on remand in Rikers Island Penitentiary, and a further eight on bail living with a church family in the New York borough of Queens.

When I first met Caroline Beale, now 31, she was in jail and clearly suffering from a severe mental disorder. She shivered and cried. She could barely form whole sentences and when she tried to talk about her dead baby she was reduced to incoherent stammering. People like Caroline Beale are cursed twice. They have a crippling disease but they must also contend with society's belief that they are faking, that the gruesome performance of twitches and wild looks is a charade.

That is how Caroline Beale was treated by the American authorities.

Throughout her gruelling interrogation, without a lawyer present, she was addressed as though anything she said was a lie. Maybe the problem was that she wasn't crazy enough for the US authorities. If she had rolled her eyes and lolled her tongue she may have fitted more closely our picture of madness, but mental illness during pregnancy is so much more subtle than that.

Thousands of women every year suffer psychosis during pregnancy. Experts such as Professor Chantini Kumar at the Maudsley Hospital, where Caroline will be treated, say post and antenatal depressions are the least understood of mental illnesses and often receive the least public sympathy.

Dr Margaret Spinelli agrees. An eminent New York psychiatrist, she has seen Caroline Beale twice a week since January 1995. She says society expects pregnant women to be happy and radiant. "Mental illness still carries a profound stigma and that is doubly so when the victim is a pregnant mother. Look at the images of motherhood in commercials and glossy magazines - we believe a woman should be delighted to be pregnant. When her pregnancy makes a woman mentally ill our belief system cannot cope. We assume the mother is the definition of evil."

The New York prosecutors who handled Caroline Beale's case have got their pound of flesh, the district attorney will be able to add another



DANIEL JEFFREYS

With more official help, she may have avoided the need to plead guilty

guilty plea to his statistics. Yet both Kumar and Spinelli concluded that she was suffering from a major and significant psychiatric illness that meant she was not responsible for her actions. Their assessments were available more than a year ago. Why didn't Caroline Beale go free then?

"This was a political case as well," a source inside the DA's office told me. "We couldn't go too easy on her. She was white and middle class. We get baby-killing cases all the time but the perpetrators are usually black or Hispanic and we give them a really hard time. It would not have been politically acceptable to let Caroline walk without some kind of guilty plea."

So Caroline Beale was psychotic

and white - what chance did she have that her case would be handled at face value in the US courts, where money and political calculation often outweigh justice? Of course, had Caroline Beale been black or Hispanic I doubt that she would have walked free. Her original court-appointed lawyer advised her to plead guilty and accept 15 years in jail. Without his replacement, the charismatic Mike Dowd, she would have had little media attention and she may now have been in prison.

Not that we have grounds to be smug. The consulate in New York was exemplary, giving genuine and effective help. But despite repeated pleas from her parents, the Foreign Office barely lifted a finger. Her parents, who financed her defence by using their life savings, wrote to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and local MPs, all of whom received summaries of psychiatric reports.

The replies were polite but useless. The "we don't interfere in internal workings of other countries" type. How gutless. This was a British citizen in as much distress as the victim of a serious traffic accident or a mugging. Yet nothing was done.

With more official assistance Caroline Beale, officially ill by any definition, may have avoided the need to plead guilty in open court to killing her baby.

Which leaves that other puzzle: why did nobody know that this woman was pregnant? Where were her friends and relatives when she needed them?

This is an aspect of the case that Americans, especially women, find most puzzling. One explanation seems plausible. Above all, Caroline Beale and her baby were victims of "British reserve" - that insidious sickness which makes us all reluctant to intrude or even inquire about the emotions of others.

Caroline Beale's friends and relations all told me they had noticed changes in mood and behaviour during what we now know was her pregnancy. When asked why they didn't press her for explanations they almost all said: "I didn't like to pry" or "That's not the kind of thing you talk about." Yet unless the British learn to talk more about their emotions there will be other Caroline Beales and similar tragedies. Psychiatric illness has social as well as biological causes and the often suffocating nature of British relationships did much to trap Caroline Beale inside her own sickness.

Tomorrow Caroline Beale will arrive back in London accompanied by her lawyer and her New York psychiatrist. She will be taken directly to the Maudsley Hospital in south London for treatment. Her traumatic illness leaves a once-healthy baby dead and a young woman who has suffered damage, the scale of which is yet to be fully assessed.

Professor Kumar hopes that Caroline Beale's time at the Maudsley will teach us more about mental illness during pregnancy. That may be the only good thing to come out of this case.

Plot to steal the 'Crown Jewels'

Labour's republicans want a tame figurehead tainted by party politics, says Tristan Garel-Jones

So Ron Davies, Shadow Welsh Secretary, wants a republic: so, it seems, do a substantial number of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Labour is already putting forward a raft of proposals for constitutional change in Britain, so it is hardly surprising if there is suspicion that abolition of the monarchy may be part of their hidden agenda, or at least a hope for the future.

But we should be grateful to Mr Davies, forbidden as he is by Tony Blair to do so, for speaking out so frankly. It is no crime to advocate a republic and it does provide us with an opportunity to pose a few questions. There seems to be a consensus among Mr Davies and his fellow sans-culottes that they would not want an executive presidency along the lines of the United States or France, which happen to be two of the most successful expressions of republicanism. That would take away power from the House of Commons. And we can't have that. What they are after is a symbolic presidency - a presidency that would inevitably be controlled by the party machines.

We are invited to trade in one symbol for another. I think we are entitled to ask what kind of new symbol we are being offered, and why.

We are told that a republic is more in keeping with the times. But is it? I wonder if anyone on the Labour front bench could name the president of Germany, Finland, Greece or Austria? No doubt they are all extremely worthy, but no one outside their countries knows who they are. A state visit from our Sovereign attracts more popular, commercial and political interest abroad than would a visit from President Davies.

Presumably our new president would be elected. Would the term of office be fixed or coincidental with a general election? Would anyone be entitled to stand? Screaming Lord Sutch, Major Hewitt, Gaddafi? One assumes a device would be used to discourage frivolous candidates for the presidency. The bottom line is that there would be three candidates: Tory (Sir Edward Heath), Labour (Mr Peter Shore) and a Liberal Democrat. As with local government elections, the result would depend on the electoral cycle. The symbol of the nation is thus tossed recklessly into the world of party politics.

Now there is nothing inherently unclean about party politics. But much of what is good about Britain functions untouched by party consideration.

The Royal Society for the

Protection of Birds, the National Trust, the Treasury, the London Library, Britain in Bloom, the Royal Opera House, the Macmillan Nurses, St Andrews Golf Club, The Watford Citizens' Advice Bureau: all of these do credit to Britain and to those who are part of them. All would be tainted in some way if they were creatures of politics.

And so it is with the symbol of the Nation. For three years I came into moderately regular contact with the Sovereign. Like most politicians, I came to believe that what was doing politically was important and at times, I confess, I found royal duties a

Could they name the president of Germany, Finland, Greece or Austria?

hit of an intrusion. But I suspect that most people might think that it does government ministers no harm to have to take trouble over someone who stands above them, whose authority derives from a source different from their own and who owes nothing to any party. What would we make of President Shore? It would be him today, of course. Citizen Heath would stand little chance at this point in the electoral cycle. I have the good fortune to know Peter Shore and hold him in high regard, but most of the 50 per cent of the population who would have voted against him do not enjoy that privilege. Europhobes have been by President Heath.

The truth is that neither Peter Shore nor Ted Heath, serious front-rank politicians, would lend themselves to becoming the nation's senior Rotarians. The post would become a part of the coinage of political patronage handed out by the whips as a payoff to a worthy second-rank politician who never made it.

Republicanism in Britain is an attempt by those who believe that party politics is the only ball-game in town to take over and debase an institution that stands for the whole country in a way no political party can ever aspire to do. It is stealing the figurative Crown Jewels of Britain.

The writer is MP for Watford and was Minister of State in the Foreign Office, 1990-93.

My life with Michael Howard

Derek Lewis tells Polly Toynbee of the revelations that could threaten the Home Secretary

Derek Lewis, the sacked director of prisons, warns briskly that he has not gone quietly, far from it. This month his case for wrongful dismissal starts in the High Court, with a demand for the discovery of Home Office documents that he believes will prove highly embarrassing to the Home Secretary.

Speaking openly about the case, he claims that revelations in the documents could amount to a bundle of smoking guns and a couple of cases of hand grenades. They would expose the precise ways in which Michael Howard and his ministers involved themselves in the minutiae of the day-to-day running of internal prison matters. In the Commons, Michael Howard declared that he set the policy and was not responsible for operational matters. As a result, the buck stopped with Derek Lewis, who was summarily fired last October (following Sir John Leatham's report into the Whitmoor and Parkhurst escapes), and not with the minister who stayed firmly in place.

The papers will throw light into some murky and controversial corners concerning the question of just how much "arm's length" independence the Prison Service - a much heralded Next Steps agency, supposedly beyond the daily control of the Home Office - really has. Lewis is calling for the minutes of meetings which, he says, will show how he was summoned virtually every day to the Home Office by one minister or another interfering in operational matters. In 83 days, 1,000 briefing documents were called for by ministers. He says, "Most of them originated with a story in the press which the minister wanted to respond to for political reasons."

Lewis gives some graphic examples of ministerial interference. Documents, he says, will show that the Home Secretary personally intervened in the question of where Private Lee Clegg was held, following an embarrassing, right-wing press campaign to free him. He claims that for political reasons Howard wanted Clegg moved to an open prison. Ministers are not supposed to recommend preferential treatment for prisoners.

Lewis says the papers will show that ministers challenged the punishments meted out to particular prisoners - a matter that is the sole legal prerogative of prison governors. He says, "In a case where one prisoner had telephoned the media, a minister intervened to try to get a tougher punishment imposed on him." Home leave decisions for individual prisoners are, by statute, decided by the governor, but again, Lewis claims, Howard intervened. He also claims there was interference in the disciplining of staff, when the minister wanted someone fired.

All these and much more, Lewis says, will be revealed in court. After all, he knows exactly what papers to ask for, because he was there at the meetings and party to the correspondence. On the matter of his own sacking, he believes Michael Howard made the decision arbitrarily on his own. "The Home Secretary's decision to dismiss me was against the very strong advice of others in the Home Office, including the board and its non-executive directors." He will ask for the minutes of all meetings and directions given to General Leatham by Howard in the course of drawing up the report that led to Lewis's downfall.

In the Commons Michael Howard defended his decision with a quick siletto stab between the ribs, claiming Lewis's complaints were merely "the spleen of a bitter man". Lewis replies "I am not bitter", but he wants justice, plus some £75,000 in compensation.



Derek Lewis: he claims that Howard wanted Private Clegg moved to an open prison for political reasons

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Civil Service observers are amazed that the Home Office has taken this case so far down the line. There are many who presumed that the Home Secretary would rapidly settle out of court and face a lesser embarrassment rather than full disclosure of these sensitive documents.

Derek Lewis is an unlikely rebel. He seemed a strange choice for the prisons job when he was head-hunted, in 1993, from the chairmanship of UK Gold, the satellite TV station, to which he has returned. Appointed somewhat high-handedly by the then Home Secretary, Kenneth

Clarke, the First Division Association, the top civil servants' union, protested vigorously. Now they are defending him with equal vim.

Lewis has been through a Damascene transformation. I first met him when he was safely ensconced as director of prisons. He had summoned me for a private briefing following a fairly abusive article I had written. As deep background, non-attributable and off the record, he told me in total confidence what a super job he was doing and how jolly well the prisons were performing. I prodded and goaded him about the Home Secretary's "Prison Works" policy - a soaring prison population combined with financial cuts. If there

was a gleam in the eye that suggested he might agree, not an improper word passed his lips. Now he blisters with criticism of the danger in which Michael Howard is placing the creaking prison system, with longer sentences and a return to gross overcrowding. This, it must be said, is intellectually a tricky balancing act. On the one hand, he points out that he did a first-rate job, meeting every performance target he was set (and therefore earned his as yet unpaid bonus). He broke the back of the Prison Officers' Association and abolished their Spanish

office, all due entirely to his personal policies. Each prisoner costs nearly £2,000 a month. To pay for it, two weeks after sacking Lewis, Howard cut back the prison service by 15 per cent over three years. Cuts that Lewis fears will lead to an explosion as prisoners are locked up for long hours, without education or work. "Prisons only work with the consent of the majority of prisoners. It is a dangerous and difficult balance," he warns. "And there is absolutely no evidence that longer sentences mean less crime."

When Derek Lewis's case comes to court, the questions will have to be answered. Where does the buck stop? Who is accountable? What is the precise division between "operational" and "policy" matters? Does it amount to anything more than subterfuge? Now you see the minister, now you don't. In the wake of the Scott report, when civil servants face disciplinary proceedings while ministers escape punishment, this case may prove an added embarrassment.

The First Division Association says Howard has been strongly advised by his officials to settle, but he is reluctant. If he pays out the performance bonus due to Lewis, he will have to admit that Lewis met all his targets and his sacking was an arbitrary act.

In the end Mr Howard may yet decide it would be wiser to pay up the £75,000. After all, that's only the cost of keeping a mere 38 people in prison for a month. For a man paying out tax payers' money to keep an extra 10,000 as Her Majesty's guests, that is peanuts.

Howard may yet decide it would be wise to pay the £75,000 compensation - the cost of keeping 38 in jail for a month

practices. He cut violent assaults by 10 per cent and escapes by 83 per cent. On the other hand, it seems, he was efficiently administering what he knew to be a disastrous policy. Now, like Cassandra, he stands outside the prison walls shaking his fist and warning of the conflagration to come, an eruption of brimstone that may soon engulf the Home Secretary. Month by month prison numbers continue to rise - a prisons press officer confirmed rather justly yesterday, "Yes, it's at an all-time high! This week it stands at 53,357," as if it were the roller-coaster jackpot. That number is 25 per cent up, nearly 10,000 more than when Howard took

Safety first, last and always

ANOTHER VIEW

David McIntosh

Department of Trade & Industry can seek the disqualification of "unsafe directors" from taking any part in the management of business.

Unfortunately, these existing powers have not sufficiently affected boardroom attitudes. The HSE's own staffing and funding have been woefully inadequate in recent years, despite repeated calls to restore and increase its capabilities. At present, it can do little more than investigate after the loss of life or limb.

The DTI's power of disqualification for safety reasons has rarely been used

(only once, to my knowledge, in three and a half years) and yet thousands of directors have been removed for fiscal mismanagement, which has not put any lives at risk. Adding a new criminal offence to an already over-stuffed statute book may do more for lawyers' pockets than for safety. The better way forward is to encourage

management to become more safety conscious before the event.

Most disasters are the result of years of sloppy practices and ignored warnings. What is needed is legislation requiring all companies to put their safety record (including details of warnings and prosecutions) on public view. By this means, safety failures could not be swept under the corporate carpet until disaster strikes, and the public could compare safety records, as well as prices, before purchasing. Bad safety, just like bad financial performance, would have to be publicly justified or

remedied. Lives would be saved.

This idea was the main thrust of the Corporate Accountability Bill, which I prepared and my firm put forward more than four years ago, to government, opposition, the HSE, the TUC and employer groups. Putting safety records in the public domain was broadly welcomed but not pursued. It is still needed. This reform is outside the Law Commission's remit, but it is well within the power of the Government. Will it act before yet another disaster?

The writer is a senior partner of Davis Arnold Cooper, which has been involved in legal actions resulting from the Piper Alpha oil platform explosion and Hillsborough disaster.

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by Vernon Coleman

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Blow to PowerGen as bid mastermind quits

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

John Rennocks, PowerGen's dynamic finance director, is unexpectedly to quit his post in a move which will shock the industry. Mr Rennocks is the mastermind behind the generator's proposed £1.95bn takeover bid for Midlands Electricity, now in the throes of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation. He is ex-

tremely highly rated among his peers and in the City. His departure, which will be seen as a severe blow to the company, is not expected to take place until after the company announces its results in May. PowerGen is thought to have begun the search for a replacement to Mr Rennocks, who has seen the company through the various stages of privatisation, an ambitious expansion drive and two share buy-backs.

One source said yesterday: "He has had a Midas touch. He has done some pretty shrewd things and driven the company in the right direction. Part of the glitter of PowerGen is down to the fact that he has done a good job." Another said: "The City people who have heard this might happen are appalled at the prospect." The decision to leave is thought to have been taken fol-

lowing the recent appointment of a new managing director, Deryk King, former head of ICI's polyester business. Mr Rennocks is understood to have stated his desire for a change having guided PowerGen through the early years in the private sector. But it is unclear where he intends to go. Mr Rennocks is on a two-year rolling contract at PowerGen, with a basic salary of £175,000. There is speculation in the

City that Mr Rennocks has clashed in some way with Ed Wallis, the chief executive, who is moving into the chairman's role when Sir Colin Southgate leaves after the annual general meeting in July. The upheavals at the company emerge at an extremely sensitive time. The MMC is due to report on the Midlands bid, and that of National Power for South-east Electric, by 22 March. A government response may not

emerge until the end of April, which means that PowerGen must decide its next move just as the main architect of the original bid prepares to take his leave. The bids lapsed when Jan Lang, President of the Board of Trade, referred them to the MMC, saying each raised competition concerns in electricity generation and supply. The decision shocked the companies because it was in sharp contrast to his clearance of five earlier

bids, including that for Manweb by Scottish Power, which is also a substantial generator. PowerGen now faces a time of enormous change in the market, with further takeovers and mergers of regional firms expected and an anticipated consolidation of the industry. There is also the prospect of a Labour government with a stated intention of imposing a windfall tax on utilities. That aside, it is unclear what ap-

proach Labour will take to regulation of the electricity sector. The company is losing market share in UK generation to nuclear power and independent gas-fired generators and is expanding overseas. On Monday it announced the AS24bn acquisition with partners of a generating plant and coal mine in Australia. The company's own equity investment in Yallourn Energy is £208m and gives it a 49 per cent stake.

DTI signals way for huge media mergers

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The Government yesterday gave a bright green light to the current wave of mega media mergers when it said that the £3bn marriage of United News & Media and MAI would not be referred to competition authorities.

The merger, which has been approved by United's shareholders, is now awaiting acceptance by shareholders of MAI, the nominal takeover target under the structure agreed for the deal.

An MAI spokesman said yesterday: "We are very encouraged by the level of acceptance, and are very comfortable that the merger will go through within the next few weeks."

The announcement from the office of Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, was further confirmation of the Government's intentions to encourage a wholesale consolidation of the newspaper, television and radio markets, with the aim of creating British media "champions" able to compete globally.

The merger of Lord Stephens' United publisher of the Express newspapers and Lord Hollick's MAI, owner of the Meridian and Anglia ITV licences, was unveiled early last month. In advance of the passage of the new Broadcasting Bill, now being debated in the House of Lords.

Under the new, relaxed rules, newspaper publishers and television companies will be able to own each other, in a bid by the Government to give British companies the same advantages that already accrue to

global media players such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

MAI and United unveiled their merger months before the new rules were scheduled to be passed into law. The two companies used a controversial "warehousing" structure under which UBS, the merchant bank, would control 50 per cent of a company set up to hold the Express newspaper titles, thereby permitting MAI and United to avoid the current ban on cross-media ownership.

The warehousing concept has been used by other media companies to get around own-

UK channels' viewing share	
% of all viewing	
12 months to 30/11/95	
BBC1	32.1
BBC2	11.1
Channel 4	11.0
Central	5.9
Carlton	3.5
Granada	4.4
LWT	2.5
Tyne Tees	1.7
Yorkshire	3.8
Anglia	2.3
Meridian	3.1
HTV	2.7
Scottish	2.5
Ulster	1.1
Westcountry	1.0
Grampian	0.7
Border	0.4
Channel	0.1
GMTV	2.0
BSkyB	4.5
Cable and other satellite services	3.8
Total	100.0
Source: ITC	

ership rules, most recently by Granada, which took its stake in the ITV licence holder Yorkshire-Tyne Tees to 25 per cent last month.

The Government yesterday approved the MAI-United warehousing scheme as well, a decision that is likely to encourage other media companies to use similar shareholding structures.

The spotlight has shifted to Carlton Communications, Michael Green's media company. It had been tipped to make a merger-busting bid for MAI, following a £1.8bn debt-raising exercise last month. But it has since ruled out intervention in the MAI-United marriage, and is expected to acquire one or more of the remaining "independent" ITV companies.

HTV, licence holder for Wales and the West, is a leading candidate for takeover, according to media analysts. Under the terms of the new Broadcasting Bill, companies can control as many ITV licences as they wish, provided they do not control more than 15 per cent of the total television audience.

Carlton could easily buy HTV and still be left with room to expand further. Scottish Television, which yesterday unveiled sharply higher profits for 1995, is also considered a takeover candidate. However, its future will depend on its two main shareholders, the US-controlled Flextech and Mirror Group, the publishing company that owns 43 per cent of the company.

Sharply higher profits for 1995, announced yesterday, could revive speculation about the future of the Scottish company. Comment, page 17



Award-winner: Higher sales of programmes including 'Taggart' helped to produce a surge in profits at Scottish Television

STV ponders its own Scottish empire

Scottish Television is considering plans to create an all-Scottish media empire as a way of retaining its independence in the face of merger mania in the UK television sector, writes Matthew Horsman.

Ultimately, the licence-holder for Central Scotland could bid for Grampian, the ITV franchise in northern Scotland, for Scottish newspapers and for a stake in Scottish Radio. The plan has been discussed with STV's major shareholders, Flextech and Mirror Group, both of which hold 20 per cent of the shares.

It is believed that Flextech would support the sale of Scottish's 20 per cent holding in HTV, the licence-holder for Wales and the West, in order to generate additional cash to launch the all-Scottish expansion. Carlton Communications is tipped as a potential bidder for all of HTV.

Andrew Flanagan, chief executive of STV, said: "Certainly the idea has merit." He added: "The opposition has said its aim is to move toward devolution, so there will be a role to play for Scottish media

companies." A Flextech insider said: "You can imagine how powerful an all-Scottish media company could be."

Mr Flanagan said he had received no approaches from potential bidders, although he conceded that the new Broadcasting Bill had generated speculation about the future of STV. He declined to rule out acquisitions south of the border. STV also announced plans yesterday to launch a cable and satellite channel aimed at Scottish expatriates living south of the border. The new television

service may be launched in partnership with Flextech, which packages and manages themed channels for cable networks in the UK. The company has also had conversations with BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster 40 per cent-owned by Rupert Murdoch, aimed at securing carriage on the Sky network.

Mr Flanagan also said a new television channel, Glasgow Live, was likely to be announced within weeks, in conjunction with Mirror Group, owner of LineTV, the London-based cable channel.

Cadbury wins £10m in Lottery

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Cadbury Schweppes will fuel the increasingly vocal opposition to the National Lottery today when full-year figures reveal that it has recovered an £11.5m investment in the game within its first year of operation.

Analysts expect the drinks and confectionery group to announce a profit of more than £10m from its 22.5 per cent stake in Camelot, the Lottery's organiser. In the current year its return is expected to jump again to about £15m.

It will be the latest controversy in Cadbury's involvement with the Lottery. Last month a row erupted between Cadbury and a group of retailers, including J. Sainsbury, which demanded an Office of Fair Trading inquiry into Camelot's use of Cadbury's retail database in awarding the first round of 10,000 terminals.

The retailers claimed that this discriminated against non-Cadbury customers. Camelot denied any link existed between

whether a shop was awarded a terminal and whether it was a Cadbury customer.

The unexpected success of the Lottery means it has proven a bonanza for the five companies that originally invested in Camelot - GfC, De La Rue, Racal, ICL and Cadbury. All except ICL have 22.5 per cent stakes, with the computer giant holding just 10 per cent.

Although the investments have provided Lottery-style returns for the five companies, their defenders point out that the stakes were far from risk-free. When the money was put into Camelot, it was far from clear that the consortium would be selected to run the Lottery.

Attractive though the return is, the cash return to Cadbury is actually a lot less than the notional profit. Camelot paid out a £9.5m dividend last year, of which Cadbury's share was just over £2m. It is anyway fairly insignificant in the context of pre-tax profits for the year to December which are expected to show a 10 per cent rise to about £525m.

BA prepares to take on Virgin over rail link

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A fresh row looks set to erupt between British Airways and Virgin over government funding of the £3bn Channel Tunnel rail link, which is to be built by a consortium including Virgin.

British Airways said yesterday it was investigating the possibility of taking legal action over the £1.4bn government support for the link's construction.

Richard Branson's Virgin

group has a 17 per cent share in London & Continental, which was awarded the contract to build the link between London and Folkestone. As part of the deal, L&C has also been given the British share of the loss-making Eurostar train service, which it will take over in April and expects to turn into a highly profitable operation.

Yesterday Robert Ayling, BA's chief executive, said the company would be looking to see if the support for the link

deal broke European competition regulations regarding state aid for transport projects.

"We shall be studying the rail link issue and if there is a major case of state aid which in any way contravenes the EU rules, then obviously that's something we would be worried about. I would be concerned if subsidies were being used illegitimately to enable rail operators to compete unfairly with airlines, but at present I don't know if that is the case."

The airline has been highly

critical of state funding by the French and Spanish governments for their state airlines and is currently challenging the decision on Air France in the European courts.

BA and Virgin are still locked in a legal battle in the US over British Airways' "dirty tricks" campaign, about alleged poaching of transatlantic passengers from Virgin using computer information from the ticketing system.

Mr Branson has said that he in-

tends to make the high-speed Eurostar trains into "the best service in the world" and he also planned to "give the airlines a good run for their money" on the route.

He ridiculed BA's move yesterday and said: "What nonsense! It's especially rich coming from BA which was given Concorde on a plate with all its costs written off by the government, as well as extensive rights to Heathrow and Gatwick which would be worth millions on the open market."

Virgin argues that the state aid to build the link is not comparable with the subsidies being paid to the European airlines to stay in business because the construction costs are a one-off payment. Much of the aid is also destined to support domestic services between Kent and London, which will also use the link. Already this year Eurostar expects to carry 4 million passengers on its Paris route, more than the 3.25 million which the airlines carried last year.

BP overhauls performance benefit plan

BP has embarked on a far-reaching reform of performance-related benefits that will result in 330 senior managers receiving up to 40 per cent of their salary in the form of shares, writes Mary Fagan.

The scheme replaces the share options programme for almost all those involved and is expected to be measured against much more stringent criteria.

At present the long-term performance (LTP) plan includes only the top 80 executives in BP

but from this year it is expected to include a further 250 people on salaries of about £60,000 to £75,000 and above. City sources said yesterday that on the criteria set, these individuals could earn 40 per cent of their salary annually in shares but that the likely average would be 20 per cent.

An earlier scheme, which operated over five years, ends this year and according to some City analysts could yield shares worth £1.5m or more at current

market prices for John Browne, the chief executive. Sir David Simon, chairman, could be awarded shares worth more than £700,000.

In all cases those awarded shares under this earlier scheme must be held for at least five years.

The extension of the LTP plan, which is likely to be announced within weeks, is intended to boost BP's performance against other oil majors. It will run on a three-

year rolling basis with performance criteria measured over that period. Shares awarded for each performance period must be retained for a further three years.

Those involved have accountability in terms of business units as well as a series of responsibilities including energising and streamlining operations and enabling confidence and creativity among staff.

Comment, page 17

Setback for US rate cut hopes

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

Hopes that interest rates will fall in the US later this month received a setback yesterday from stronger-than-expected figures for manufacturing orders.

The disappointment held Wall Street back from setting a new record after its 63-point surge to 5,600.15 on Monday, but economists said there was still a chance that the Federal Reserve would reduce rates after its 26 March meeting. Figures for February employment, due on Friday, are likely to be decisive.

The Dow Jones index, which last week hit a high of 5,630.49, was four points lower at midday yesterday, having retraced an opening jump. Shares in London ended subdued after a buoyant start which took the FTSE 100 index to an intra-day record of 3,792.5, although most analysts still firmly expect a cut in UK interest rates at the end of this week.

The FTSE 100 index finished the day nearly nine points higher at 3,777.1, just four points shy of its closing all-time high. Gilt fell slightly, following the lead of US Treasuries.

Germany's Bundesbank is

also expected to ease policy, with 28 March seen as the most likely date. Shares in Frankfurt ended lower yesterday.

The culprit behind yesterday's volatility in the markets was an unexpected increase in US factory orders and orders for durable goods in January. Most economists had expected them to fall as a result of the blizzards that month.

Brian Fabbri, economist at the investment bank Paribas in New York, said: "The expectations were more affected by the weather than the figures turned out to be." He said on balance it still looked like the economy was uncomfortably weak in the first quarter of the year. New orders for factory goods rose 0.5 per cent in January, their fourth increase in six months.

STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Yield (%)	Index	Close	Day's change
FTSE 100	3777.10	+9.50	+0.2	3781.30	2954.20	3.89	Nikkei	21400	+100
FTSE 250	4272.20	+27.30	+0.6	4272.20	3300.90	3.45	Dow Jones	5630.49	-4
FTSE 350	1889.00	+5.90	+0.3	1889.00	1482.40	3.80	Hang Seng	10600	+100
FT Small Cap	2069.46	+5.49	+0.3	2069.46	1678.61	3.05	Hong Kong	11484.08	+200.03
FT All Share	1864.89	+5.76	+0.3	1864.89	1498.23	3.74	Frankfurt	2479.03	-8.96
FT All Share	6602.31	+2.18	+0.0	6602.31	3632.06	2.15			
Tokyo	20183.87	+119.93	+0.6	21118.30	14485.40	0.77			
Hong Kong	11484.08	+200.03	+1.8	11594.99	6997.92	3.27			
Frankfurt	2479.03	-8.96	-0.4	2501.22	1910.96	1.84			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	6.13	6.06	7.82	8.43	7.89	8.80			
US	5.25	5.13	5.98	7.44	6.40	7.63			
Japan	0.47	0.72	3.22	4.69					
Germany	3.31	3.31	6.32	7.47	7.15				
Bond Yields %									
Money Market Rates									
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	6.13	6.06	7.82	8.43	7.89	8.80			
US	5.25	5.13	5.98	7.44	6.40	7.63			
Japan	0.47	0.72	3.22	4.69					
Germany	3.31	3.31	6.32	7.47	7.15				
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Rises	Falls	Chang's	Falls	Chang's	Falls	Chang's	Falls	Chang's	Falls
British Biotech	2320	272	13.3	Amstrad	209	6	2.8		
Nynex Cablecom	111	6	5.7	Tarmac	119	3	2.5		
Harrison & Crossfield	172	8	4.9	Pearson	689	14	2.0		

CURRENCIES

£/\$

£/DM

£/¥

DM Bank's closing and DM Bank's bid at 100 hours

Pound			Dollar			
Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	
£ (London)	1.5278	-0.04c	1.6237	£ (London)	0.6545	+0.01
£ (New York)	1.5285	+0.05c	1.6395	£ (New York)	0.6538	-0.02
DM (London)	2.2584	+0.21pf	2.2511	DM (London)	1.4789	+0.31pf
DM (New York)	1.9305	+0.01pf	1.9305	DM (New York)	1.4789	+0.31pf
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The same old media story, only slightly bigger

COMMENT

This merger is merely the marriage of two quite traditional sets of businesses. Tired newspapers and monopoly terrestrial television do not make exciting bedfellows.

The trail-blazing merger between MAI and United News & Media now looks a sure thing, with only a few pieces yet to fall into place. The shareholders of United have passed it overwhelmingly, while early indications from MAI shareholders, who must tender their shares to United, are that it will sail through. The Government obliged yesterday with confirmation that the merger will not be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, also gave the green light to the controversial "warehousing scheme" used by the two companies to get around cross-media ownership rules.

The problem, of course, is that the merger looks no more convincing now than when it was announced early in February. The clear winners will be Lord Hollick of MAI, who seems to have kept his company out of the clutches of the dreaded Michael Green, and Lord Stevens, who could not convince anyone to buy the ailing Express titles and was obliged to seek a partnership in order to retain the City's confidence.

This merger does not create the kind of media giant the Government wants to encourage - integrated companies with the ability effortlessly to expand into new media, pay-TV, interactive services and the like. It is merely the marriage of two quite traditional sets of businesses. Tired newspapers and monopoly terrestrial television do not make exciting bedfellows.

The really bright combination would have

been Carlton Communications and MAI, to create a big, southern-based ITV super-region, generating plenty of cash to finance new media acquisitions.

With MAI now stuck with United, and talking meekly about cross-promotion of new television ventures in the pages of the Express, the much-hyped consolidation of the ITV sector will be far less radical. We will probably get Granada/LWT taking on Yorkshire-Tyne Tees and Carlton taking on HTV (and maybe Scottish). The little players will be mopped up along the way.

Not much reward for all the effort, and certainly not enough to prepare for the next radical phases of change in the media: fragmentation of the television audience, the growth of digital TV, the introduction of direct-to-home Internet via cable and the like.

Worse, there are no signs that any British company will emerge from this strong enough to take on the world. No embryonic News Corporations or Disneys or Time-Warner are being moulded. Just slightly bigger versions of the same old story. What a missed opportunity.

Odds are on a cut in US rates soon

Figuring out what is happening to an economy - which economists like to dignify with the term conjunctural analysis - is difficult enough at the best of times. In the case of the US it has become almost impossible.

The Federal Government shutdown resulted in a double whammy that hit spending directly in December and also delayed most of the important economic statistics. Then nature intervened in the shape of unusually foul weather in January.

These distortions coincided with a period of slowdown that was already difficult to interpret. As in Britain, most signals from manufacturing have pointed to sharply weaker growth. The housing market has been in decline for several months - and now faces higher mortgage rates, which are linked to long-term market interest rates in the US. Inflation has remained subdued. To confuse matters even more, late last year the Commerce Department began to publish new estimates of GDP which showed far lower growth than on the old basis.

On the other hand, the unemployment rate has been steady for about a year and consumer spending has held up pretty well as the economy has slowed. And some figures, like orders yesterday, suggest that the underlying picture might not be too bad anyway.

What will Mr Greenspan make of all this? The Fed chairman is famous for his skill and appetite for scrutinising the minutest details of the statistics. His recent Congressional testimony showed that the Fed is not forecasting a recession. Like many other economists, Mr Greenspan appears to think there

will be a recovery from the current phase of weakness.

He gave few clues as to whether he thought this recovery would need the stimulus of another interest rate reduction or not, leaving the financial markets jumping up and down in reaction to every new statistic. But the odds are on a cut in the key Federal Funds rate at the end of March for two reasons. One, inflation looks extremely tame. Two, the canny Fed chairman would like to keep the economy ticking along nicely in Presidential election year. He will want to avoid the danger of having to make controversial decisions as the November poll date draws nearer - especially as job cuts have already become a campaign issue.

The right way to award share options

Share incentive schemes equal fat cats Sequel unbridled greed. That is the common perception of the use of shares as a reward at the top in British companies, and in some cases it is perfectly accurate, as the snouts in the troughs at some of the privatised utilities testified.

However, the Greenbury report on executive remuneration took pains to spell out last year that shares can actually be a useful way of paying people as long as the method is worked out properly and fairly. Old fashioned share option schemes have

their defenders, but the utility scandal gave them a bad name because of the way they often reward for the vagaries of market movements. Even before last year's events the mood among remuneration specialists had already swung towards outright gifts of shares as a simpler and more effective incentive.

The key principles, according to Greenbury, are that shares should not be awarded in excessive amounts; they must be held for at least three years; and there should be "challenging performance criteria", preferably measured against a peer group of companies. But the report could have gone further and spelled out the need for boards to spread the largesse around more widely than their own pockets to create a sense of a fairness in their companies.

This does not mean going as far as Asda in handing share options to the checkout girls. But the wider and deeper the incentive scheme is in a company the more likely it is to work internally and to be seen to be acceptable to the outside world, including institutional shareholders.

BP's chairman, Sir David Simon, was a member of the Greenbury committee. The company's new incentive scheme extends the award of shares to more than 300 managers and sets targets based on the performance of seven other oil majors, so it only pays in full when BP's shareholder return equals or beats the best. If the utilities had been as scrupulous, we would never have had the row about top pay in the first place.

BT 'must give up market share'

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The fall in telephone prices in the UK over recent years is unlikely to be sustained unless BT is forced by the regulator to give up some market share, according to National Utility Services, a leading consultancy. To achieve this, telecommunications regulation needs to be radically overhauled, the consultancy said yesterday.

The latest report from NUS concludes that BT must be forced to relinquish market power if competition is to survive and that policy so far has failed in that respect. It warns that continued tough price controls do more harm to BT's rivals than to the company itself and are bad for competition in the long term.

An NUS survey of call charges for UK business shows that bills have fallen substantially but questions whether the downward pressure on prices will continue in the long term. Andrew Johns, NUS director, said an entirely new look at regulation was needed. In the short term, tighter price controls on BT hit rivals, who were forced to follow suit. At the same time the price-cutting helped BT to maintain market share.

Mr Johns said BT should be forced to reduce market share to perhaps as little as 40 per cent by having to maintain prices above a certain level until true competition was introduced. A similar approach, he pointed out, was used successfully with

International telecoms charges: league table 1996											
LOCAL CALL			NATIONAL CALL			LINE RENTAL					
Country	price		Country	price		Country	price		Country	price	
1. Netherlands	11.2		Germany	78.3		Canada	35.42				
2. Belgium	10.9		France	67.2		US	15.28				
3. Australia	10.8		Italy	60.5		Sweden	12.95				
4. Germany	10.8		Belgium	45.9		Germany	11.52				
5. UK	8.8		Australia	43.0		Australia	10.97				
6. France	8.1		US	37.4		UK	10.95				
7. Italy	7.6		Denmark	30.2		Belgium	10.07				
8. Sweden	7.0		Netherlands	22.5		Netherlands	9.94				
9. US	4.5		Sweden	19.2		Italy	6.98				
10. Canada	3.0		UK	18.9		France	5.00				

British Gas, which was forced to publish and stick to price schedules for certain groups of business customers.

At present, BT still has a 90 per cent market share in spite of the 150 rival operators in various sections of the market. Mr Johns said the "paradoxical notion" that tighter price caps suppress competition was explained by BT's financial muscle.

"The telecoms giant can absorb lower prices dictated by price restrictions, but its rivals, who must follow suit and drop prices in order to stay competitive, are unable to sustain the reduction in revenue as their margins become eroded."

He said that in the US, the government "kept AT&T at bay" when the market opened by limiting its price cuts so that

competition could flourish. The report comes as the regulator, Don Cruickshank, prepares his decision on the future of UK telecommunications regulation. A new regime must be devised to take effect when the current price caps expire next year.

Mr Johns said: "I am amazed Ofel has so far taken this approach - focusing on price caps but not taking a look at the balance of the market as a whole."

The NUS survey of business customers shows that in the 12 months to February, international call prices fell by 21 per cent. National call charges dropped by 10 per cent, making the UK the cheapest place of 10 countries surveyed in which to make a long distance call.

Local call charges dropped by



Price-capper Don Cruickshank is preparing his decision on the future of telecommunications regulation

11 per cent but Britain still remains around the middle of the league.

Globally, American customers saw the biggest fall in international call charges with a

drop of nearly 36 per cent because of increasing competition. In Germany prices fell by 30 per cent while in Sweden and Belgium prices slid by 23.4 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Hutchison franchise deal takes BhS into China

NIGEL COPE

Two of Britain's leading retailers have announced plans to accelerate their international expansion. Tesco is spending £77m buying two supermarket groups in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Meanwhile Storehouse has signed a franchise agreement with the Hong Kong giant Hutchison Whampoa to develop BhS in the Far East.

Tesco's deal strengthens its position in Central Europe. It already operates 45 stores under the Tesco name in Hungary, and last November bought a 76 per stake in Savia, which has 36 stores in Poland.

Tesco is buying the two companies from K-Mart and expects to complete the deal in April. The two companies control 13 stores with combined annual sales of £140m last year, of which food accounts for a third.

Tesco said that the deals would enable it to grow both its food and non-food businesses in Central Europe, the economies of both the Czech Republic and Slovakia were forecast to grow by 4-5 per cent this year.

Storehouse has signed an agreement with Hutchison Whampoa's retailing division AS Watson, to open the first branches of BhS in the Far East. Initially it plans to open two branches in Hong Kong and Shanghai, with plans for others in China and Taiwan.



Growth plans: Storehouse chief Keith Edelman

development and now accounts for 6 per cent of group sales.

BhS now has 50 franchised branches in 12 countries, mainly in the Middle East and Southern Europe, including Spain and Greece. Mothercare has 112 outlets in 21 countries. It has a strong presence in the Far East, particularly Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

In May BhS will open its first branch in Moscow and Mothercare will open its third. Mothercare also has openings planned for Manila, Brunei and the Lebanon.

Storehouse said it was working on other deals that would take the company into new markets but declined to be drawn on details. Chief execu-

tive Keith Edelman said: "We see the expansion of our international franchise network as a very important part of our strategic growth plans. By the end of next year our international business should be approaching 10 per cent of group turnover."

Last week Storehouse paid Boots £62.5m for Childrens World, the out of town childrens stores which it plans to convert to the Mothercare format. The company says it plans to stick to two main divisions. Its smaller Blazer menswear format is seen as more secure but is making modest profits.

Storehouse shares jumped 9p to 339p. Tesco shares closed 2p higher at 281.5p.

IN BRIEF

Drug news boosts British Biotech shares

British Biotech, the fledgling pharmaceutical group, saw its stock market value soar by £155m to £1.3bn yesterday, after the City responded well to the latest news of its Marimastat anti-cancer drug and marked its shares up by 27p to £23.20. The number of patients involved in phase II trials has more than doubled to over 400 since November, although the dosage has been cut. The company also announced it had started pre-clinical tests on a new treatment for multiple sclerosis, code-named BB-3644. British Biotech's losses for the nine months to January were cut from £17.9m to £15m and the cash balance stood at £77m in January.

Gehe bid set for UK scrutiny

The European Commission looks set to hand back scrutiny of the £650m bid by Gehe of Germany for Lloyds Chemists back to the UK authorities, paving the way for referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. A source at the Commission said that once the British Government makes clear its reasoning on the bid "it should make sense" to hand it back. The rival bid from UniChem was referred to the Monopolies Commission last week.

Business failures up 11%

Business failures increased by 11 per cent to 181 in February compared with 161 in January, according to the accountancy firm Deloitte & Touche. However, the firm said the figures were relatively stable compared with last year and there was still a declining trend. In February 1995, there were 176 failures.

Airbus seeks share of \$6bn deal

Airbus Industrie, in which British Aerospace is a partner, confirmed that it is negotiating a share of an order with International Lease Finance for aircraft worth \$6bn, to be split with Boeing. Negotiations are also under way with several other "potential customers" for its A330-200 model, launched last November.

Profits soar at Inspec

Inspec said it expected 1996 to be a year of consolidation and organic growth after reporting a 179 per cent jump in profits to £34.2m for last year. Formerly part of BP's fine chemicals division, Inspec has doubled in size in little more than a year after buying the oil group's Antwerp site for £80.4m.

Canadian deal costs M&S £15m

Wicks and Spencer said it will take a £15m charge in its 1995/96 accounts on the sale of its Canadian subsidiary D'Alairds Stores to Comark in a transaction which is expected to be finalised by the end of March. D'Alairds operates 85 stores across Canada.

EMAP looks at French titles

EMAP confirmed it is interested in buying two French magazines, Top Santé and Téléstar. A spokesman said: "It is no surprise given its position in the French magazine market that EMAP is interested in the titles. But no deal has been finalised yet."

French car makers warn Lucas

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Lucas Industries, tipped to take a stake in the French car components maker Valeo, could face opposition from France's two motor manufacturers, PSA Peugeot-Citroen and Renault.

The car makers have warned they might stop doing business with Valeo if it fell into foreign hands. Lucas is one of several companies rumoured to want to buy Carlo De Benedetti's controlling stake in Valeo, thought to be worth about £500m.

Jacques Calvet, chairman of PSA, yesterday told reporters at the Geneva Motor Show that if

he did not like the takeover he would progressively halt purchases from Valeo. "And that is final," he said.

Mr De Benedetti owns 28 per cent of Valeo but controls 42 per cent of the voting rights. Lucas's chief executive, George Simpson, recently forecast a wave of mergers in the car components sector, but the company yesterday declined to comment on the Valeo speculation.

Mr Calvet said he wanted to see French ownership of Valeo, the country's largest parts supplier and Europe's second largest. "I want Valeo to remain French. I will do everything to

ensure that," he told Reuters news agency.

The chairman of state-controlled Renault, Louis Schweitzer, said he would be alarmed if a change of Valeo's ownership affected its relationship with his company.

The Peugeot group and Renault are Valeo's two biggest clients, accounting for around 35 per cent of its sales last year, worth more than Fr25bn (£3.3bn).

Lucas would need a huge rights issue to fund a Valeo purchase, and the company may also attempt to raise money by selling its aerospace division.

Meanwhile, in Geneva yes-

terday, the president of General Motors Europe forecast that unemployment and the poor economic outlook would depress car sales across the continent this year.

But GM's European operations would command the largest tranche of the group's capital expenditure over the next five years, with Opel receiving about \$6.3bn (£4.2bn) and Vauxhall, the UK division, about \$1bn.

GM is also believed to have reached an agreement with Sweden's Investor to refinance their jointly-owned car maker Saab.

Bluebird plans £10m share buy-back

NIGEL COPE

Bluebird Toys, the Polly Pocket and Mighty Max toy group, announced a fall in profits yesterday alongside plans for a £10m share buy-back.

The company currently has £34m of net cash and will be seeking shareholder approval to repurchase the shares. A spokesman said: "There is no point in spending the money on buying out toy companies. The toy market now is all about power brands and you can't just buy those."

Bluebird had a tough year in 1995 as its popular Mighty Max range of boys' toys ran out of steam and Mimi and the Goo Goos performed below expectations. However the fall in profits was in line with expectations and the shares fell only 6p to 31p.

Pre-tax profits for the year to December fell from £19.7m last year to £17.8m this time.

Sales were also down 12 per cent to £87m, though the dividend was increased by 12.5 per cent to 6.75p.

The Polly Pocket girls' range performed strongly as did Peter Pan, despite dull trading in many markets. The Peter Pan range will shortly include electronic diaries and other handheld electronic toys under the Bluebird name.

Bluebird has recently signed deals with Mattel and Walt Disney to develop miniature play-sets featuring Disney characters. It has also signed deals with Hasbro for a Batman range and Marvel for Spider-Man toys.

It has high hopes for a new idea called Space Monkeys, which will be launched this year and is based on an animated TV programme, Captain Simian and the Space Monkeys. Bluebird expects only limited sales this year but larger volumes in 1997.

Credit Suisse six win case over notice time

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Nine private client stockbrokers who resigned from Credit Suisse Asset management last August over what they called a clash of cultures, and were immediately sent on "garden leave" which prevented them working during their notice period, have won the right at a High Court hearing to start work immediately with their new employer, James Capel.

Although six were on 12-month contracts, which are common in the City, notice is usually worked in full or part. The Deputy Judge, Mr David Steel, ruled that their skills could begin to atrophy if they were unable to work anywhere for a full year as Credit Suisse demanded, and six months was the maximum reasonable period for gardening leave.

If the judgment is upheld, it could set a precedent in situations that are becoming increasingly common. But Mr Steel also ruled that restrictive covenants in the nine contracts, preventing the individual brokers from having contact with clients they had dealt with at Credit Suisse for up to 12 months, are enforceable.

This ruling means that up to 700 private clients who have transferred their business from Credit Suisse to James Capel to stay with their long-standing advisers could be denied access to them for a further six months. The nine stockbrokers have launched an appeal which is due to be heard in about a fortnight. Credit Suisse also has the right to appeal against the ruling on garden leave.

The appeal will be held in open session and is expected to bring into the open details of the clash of cultures, which replaced traditional broker-client services and single fees with a centralised system with multiple charging structures.

finance & legal

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

CRH shows how well it pays to be single-minded

CRH learned its lesson in the early 1980s when exposure to the collapsing Irish economy left the building materials company high and dry. Since then a single-minded focus on costs, geographical diversity and cash generation has yielded an impressive record of steadily rising earnings and dividends through thick and very thin.

Figures for the year to December showed a second successive year of buoyant growth. Pre-tax profits jumped 38 per cent to £160m, earnings per share were 35 per cent better at 135.6p and the twelfth consecutive rise in dividends a 12 per cent improvement to 19.1p.

In the face of difficult markets in the UK and a progressive slowdown in the US and Europe that was an impressive performance – and confirmation that even in difficult markets quality companies such as RMC, Wolsley and CRH can make a good living.

One of the most impressive features of CRH's growth over the years has been the way the company has managed to expand largely out of internally generated cash flow. Despite spending £121.5m on acquisitions and capital investment, borrowings ended the year only £18.5m higher at £150.6m to give an unchanged gearing figure of 21 per cent. The company promises continued high levels of investment for the foreseeable future but analysts think the ratio of borrowings to net assets will remain broadly unchanged this year as well.

For investors that is a reassuring strength in the face of what promises to be a difficult year. While assuring shareholders yesterday that profits would enjoy another good year of progress in 1996, CRH warned that it would be unrealistic to expect repeat growth rates to be repeated.

That translates into forecasts of £185m this year and £205.5m next time for earnings of 41p and 45.6p respectively. At yesterday's price of 549p, down 9p, the shares trade on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 13

falling to 12. They deserve a premium to the sector and, despite their strong run since 1992, still have some way to run.

TDG gears up for the upturn

Transport Development, the contract hire and logistics group, has been restructuring for half a decade or

more, but it has been like running up the down escalator. The cutthroat competition among supermarkets, traditionally the main customers for TDG's all-encompassing logistics service, has meant that all the savings over the years have been handed back in margins, which have halved since 1990.

That goes a long way to explaining yesterday's pedestrian 7 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £36.1m for

the year to December. Excluding hire looks unexciting. Flatish gains and losses on property sales and profits of £36m this year would put other disposals, operating profits the shares, up 3p to 216p, on a forward rating of 13. About right.

Given the maturity of the market supplying retailers, last year's slide from £22.5m to £20.6m in profits from TDG's new consumer division is unsurprising. More worrying was the industrial distribution business. This relatively undeveloped market for logistics is where the excitement is expected in future, yet most of last year's growth there came from one-offs. Underlying profits soared from £3.9m to £10.1m.

Recent contract renewals have again been at lower margins, but TDG believes that the downturn has now bottomed out and it is hitting its target 15 per cent rate of return on repeat business. Having kept clear of the troubles affecting almost every-else in the sector and with 6 per cent gearing, TDG should be well placed to benefit from any further rationalisation of the industry, but it could be some way off and meanwhile the group's push into plant and ve-

Quality road for Pendragon

Sales of top-of-the-range cars in the UK rose 30 per cent last year, dwarfing the mere 1.8 per cent increase for the market in general. That was good news for dealerships like Pendragon, which specialise in prestige marques rather than volume cars.

Pre-tax profits were up 18 per cent to £11.32m, due largely to another rise in sales of cars like BMW, Jaguar and Land Rover.

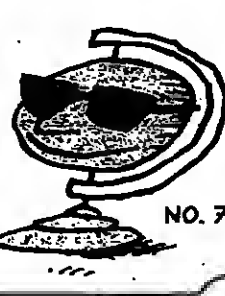
With luxury manufacturers planning to launch new and cheaper models this year, including Jaguar's E-Type successor, there should be enough to tempt consumers onto the forecourt. And Pendragon's ability to outperform the market – its sales of EU-made luxury vehicles rose 32 per cent last year – means carmakers will

be willing to award it new franchises. Pendragon invested £8.6m in new businesses last year and is opening six new Volvo dealerships in South London. Increasingly manufacturers are allowing dealerships to operate in bigger territories, which means firms such as Pendragon get greater economies of scale.

After the success of its first Harley Davidson motorcycle franchise, Pendragon has opened a second showroom, which the company said was making profits. And its contract hire business achieved a 41 per cent rise in operating profit to £5.6m.

Industry figures for January suggest that luxury sales for some manufacturers are falling, although this probably has more to do with product change-overs than a fall in the market. Pendragon believes the up-market sector will continue to grow. Against that backdrop, analysts' profit forecasts for 1996 are between £13.2m and £13.5m. On a forward PE ratio of 13 at 287p, up 2p yesterday, the rating is not demanding for a quality company.

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CITY DIARY
John Willcock

When mower demand runs dry



Scorched earth: The drought showered profits on some parts

The Lord gives, and the Lord taketh away. Transport Development Group made £90,000 by lorrying water to the drought-stricken North-east via its Linkman subsidiary last year. Unveiling its annual results yesterday, the company was forced to admit that "the drought which helped Linkman hindered Woodrich, whose major customer, Fyeno, experienced a sharp fall in demand for lawnmowers." Is this a contra-cyclical strategy in action?

Joanne Hindle has resigned as head of the Personal Investment Authority's pensions unit to head NatWest Life's pensions development unit, after just over a year at the watchdog. The popular Hindle has already held a wide selection of jobs in the personal finance area – as well as being a Coronation Street addict.

For instance in 1986 she joined the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association (Biba) as director of financial services. Then in 1989 she had a brief spell as director general of the Market Research Society, before becoming chief executive officer of IFA Promotions. So that makes La Hindle a poacher-turned gamekeeper-turned poacher-turned gamekeeper-turned poacher. I think.

And they're off. Sir Richard Kleinwort, a leading light at City spin doctors Cardew & Co., was distracted from his usual job of opinion-forming yesterday by a racehorse. Nefarious is owned by his wife Lucinda, who inherited the ring from her father Bill Shand Kydd, a famous national hunt jockey of the 1960s. Nefarious had a superb first season last year, coming first at Windsor on Lucinda's 30th birthday, but then got kicked by another horse and

had to be rested. Yesterday Nefarious ran his second race this season, the 4.10 at Newbury – and came ninth out of nine. "He'll need another four races before he's back to full fitness – he still jumps extremely well," Sir Richard said gamely last night.

From the boardroom to the doghouse in a single week. Lord Sheppard of Didgmore retired as chairman of BAT Industries last Thursday, having reached 62. This Thursday he will be helping to choose which cat and which dog win the 1996 Petplan/Animal Health Trust "WAG" Awards. There is also a category for one person, a "Companion Animal Personality" who has dedicated his or her life to looking after animals. Four finalists have been picked and the winner will receive a prize at a ceremony hosted by Noel Edmonds. Let's keep our fingers crossed that some hound will take a chunk out of the ghastly man's trousers.

Sir Michael Perry, chairman of Unilever, was made a Commander in the Order of Orange Nassau yesterday by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. Nobody at Unilever yesterday knew quite what the Order was – a type of tulip, perhaps – or larger?

They did know however that it was in recognition of Sir Michael's services to the development of Anglo-Dutch relations. Congratulations, anyway. Not to be outdone, Country Gardens, a garden centre company which was one of the first to float on AIM, yesterday won a "Golden Bulb" award in Amsterdam. This award was definitely about tulips. According to the company yesterday, the bulbs are judged "on bulb size rather than stem length".

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Shell (T)	87.28m (96.42m)	17.62m (18.65m)	26.0p (26.7)	8.0p (8.0)
British Steel (T)	8.19m (7.74m)	-4.05m (-4.62m)	-0.3p (-1.1p)	nil (nil)
BSM (T)	24.24m (24.30m)	5.30m (4.80m)	14.0p (12.8)	6.0 (-)
CRH (T)	81.21m (1.61m)	81.60m (81.16m)	35.5p (26.4)	9.10p (8.10)
European Leisure (T)	36.69m (32.21m)	2.22m (1.71m)	18.8p (12.5p)	nil (nil)
Ind Insurance (T)	- (-)	35.52m (20.80m)	53.5p (22.9p)	11.25p (8.0p)
Pendragon (T)	52.61m (43.93m)	4.05m (3.02m)	8.2p (6.8p)	1.9p (1.7)
Imperial (T)	155.48m (74.12m)	31.1m (13.3m)	20.0p (12.1p)	6.5p (4.0)
Steel (T)	18.82m (17.28m)	4.22m (3.24m)	26.3p (21.9p)	15p (12)
Pendragon (T)	508.90m (388.85m)	11.32m (8.80m)	19.7p (17.3p)	6.0p (-)
Polen (T)	223.55m (247.20m)	-1.55m (1.06m)	-0.79p (0.28p)	nil (0.5)
STV (T)	100.52m (118.20m)	20.2m (2.0m)	27.7p (3.70p)	16.25p (14.0p)
TDG (T)	510.35m (496.48m)	36.1m (33.9m)	16.5p (15.5p)	9.5p (9.0p)

(T) = Total (I) = Interim (N) = Nine months

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market report/shares

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FT-SE 100
3777.1 +8.5

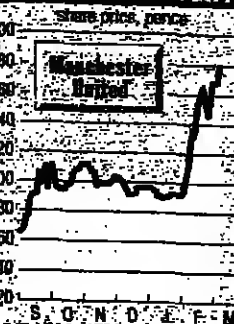
FT-SE 250
4272.2 +27.3

FT-SE 350
1889.0 +5.9

SEAQ VOLUME
863,000 shares
37,634 bargains

Gilts Index
93.86 -0.04

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Hanson edges ahead as stories of a big sale circulate

Hanson, the out-of-favour conglomerate which has elected to undertake a four-way demerger, caught the imagination of the stock market as stories swirled that a big sale could precede the split.

The shares edged ahead 1p to 191.5p in brisk trading. The market has, since the Hanson break-up was first envisaged, taken the view that one of its most alluring parts, the Imperial Tobacco interest, would be sold before the demerger could be completed.

But the feeling is growing that despite the obvious desirability of Imps, Hanson has an even more valuable jewel in its crown - its most recent acquisition, Eastern Group, the electricity company.

The Americans, according to popular belief, are queuing

for the privilege of taking out our remaining independent electricity groups. In the past week, Yorkshire Electricity has displayed some ambivalence about a US strike, Eastern, which cost Hanson £2.5bn, could represent a much less complicated avenue for the Americans than shooting for a fully quoted company.

Hanson has had a torrid time since the four-way demerger was announced. The shares have been as low as 180p; their recent firmness suggests the initial reaction was too cautious, allowing room for the Hanson spectacular which his Lordship, even in his 75th year, could well mastermind.

Henderson Crosthwaite, the securities house, said the Hanson aura as suggestions circulated that it had alighted on a 225p break-up valuation. The rest of the stock market showed signs of wanting to



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

move into new territory. At one time the FT-SE 100 index was riding at its highest-ever level, 23.9 points up at 3,792.5. But it all proved too much and by the close Footsie was 8.5 higher at 3,777.1.

The supporting index, measuring the 250 shares immediately outside Footsie, was again in rampant form, perhaps indicating that the underlying economic strength was rather more encouraging than blue chips indicated. The 250 index was 27.3 higher at 4,272.2.

Hopes of interest rate cuts are providing much of the market's encouragement. Tomorrow's Keo and Eddie

meeting is expected to sanction another reduction.

Trafalgar House was unchanged at 48.25p. There are signs that the Kvaerner bid could run into trouble in Norway. At least one Norwegian investor with around 1 per cent of the capital has expressed disquiet over the £904m acquisition. The investor has pointed out that the bid was comfortably ahead of many recent estimates of Trafalgar's value.

By shareholders have demanded a special meeting to discuss the offer but unless they can muster 10 per cent of the shares behind their call, a shareholders' meeting will not

under Norwegian law, be called.

Manchester United soared 15p to a 280p peak on its victory over Newcastle and increasingly speculation about television plans. The club said it had "no firm plans" to establish its own TV channel but added that if it did bypass the big broadcasters "the money potential is tremendous but there could be potential difficulties".

The bio babes had a hasty session, led by British Biotech, which jumped on more trials of its cancer drug. The shares gained 27p to 2,320p, still below the peak hit in the last upsurge created by the progress of its cancer treatment. Chiroscience added 9p to 266p on talk that the long-term cash raise in operation was under way.

Glaxo Wellcome, figures today, rose 4p to 920p. The market is looking for £2,550m against £1,899m.

Acorn Computer shaded 4p to 219p. Olivetti, the Italian group, has again cut its stake; it is now down to 45.9 per cent. Co-founder Hermann Hauser has also sold shares and his interest is now 3.6 per cent.

Vodafone rose 5.5p to 246p, with ABN Amro Hoare Govett suggesting the sum of the parts was more than 300p.

Nynex, the cable group, gained 6p to 111p on continuing merger speculation. TeleWest, one name in the frame, gained 4p to 140p. The raids at Tarmac and Amec left the shares lower. Tarmac fell 3p to 119p and Amec 4p to 95p.

Ticketing, the struggling leisure group soon to be called First Call, returned at 10.5p. Union Mutual Pension Fund has 29.9 per cent.

Crest Nicholson, the builder, held at 74p. Rowan Dartington, the stockbroker, estimated assets per share at 92p.

TAKING STOCK

Rossport, almost laid low by the disastrous takeover of fellow engineer Willis, is showing intriguing signs of life. The shares of the once high-flying group edged ahead 0.5p to 4p, highest since November. The battered and bruised business, run by Ian Orrock, was forced into a £2.2m rescue rights issue at 3p a share. The price has since been down to 2p.

Metal Bulletin, the publisher and conference organiser, jumped 70p to a 773p peak following a 30 per cent profit advance to £4.2m. Year's dividend is 16p (12p). It is the eighth year running that profits have advanced and the market expects this year's out-turn to nudge £5m. Emap has a 20.6 per cent, acquired at around 180p a share.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex-rates: Ex-dividend: Ex-all: Unlisted Securities Market: Suspended: Party Paid: No Paid Shares. Source: Firstcall.

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Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
Vodafone	100,000	Hanson	100,000	ASDA Group	80,000
Unilever	100,000	REAN	100,000	BAA	80,000
United TSB	100,000	BT	100,000	Sainsbury	70,000
Shell UK	100,000	BT	100,000	BT	70,000
Trafalgar House	100,000	TeleWest	100,000	United TSB	70,000

FT-SE 100 index hour by hour

Time	Index	Time	Index
Open 3765.4 up 7.8		11.00 3794.1 up 15.5	
10.00 3784.4 up 18.8		12.00 3784.4 up 18.8	
		13.00 3778.9 up 11.0	
		Close 3777.1 up 8.5	

High/Low

Stock	High	Low	Stock	High	Low
Unilever	100.00	99.00	Unilever	100.00	99.00
Unilever	100.00	99.00	Unilever	100.00	99.00
Unilever	100.00	99.00	Unilever	100.00	99.00
Unilever	100.00	99.00	Unilever	100.00	99.00

Telecommunications

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Textiles & Apparel

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Retailers, Food

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Retailers, General

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Transport

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Water

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Support Services

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Rights Issues

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Recent Issues

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

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Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Index-linked

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Shorts

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Medium

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Longs

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Undated

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Household Goods

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Insurance

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Media

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Life Assurance

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Printing & Paper

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Property

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50
Unilever	100.00	+0.50	Unilever	100.00	+0.50

Support Services

Some still are more equal than others



INDUSTRY VIEW
YVETTE COOPER

Feeling proud of your hard-earned salary? Possibly, just possibly, the job you do and the cash you pick up at the end of the month fairly reflects the value the market places on your distinctive talents and effort. But don't start celebrating the advent of meritocracy yet. The chances are you are stuck at around the same rung on the earning ladder as your father was before you. Despite the new and fluid labour market we all supposedly inhabit, the evidence shows that earning power is passed on through the family from generation to generation.

Sir Rocco Forte and Elizabeth Murdoch are obvious cases of families perpetuating their economic position. Elizabeth has made a plum job in Daddy's media empire, while Sir Rocco runs a family restaurant. The Fortes' leisure group is his father built. But these were supposed to be the exceptions. Nepotism may explain away the huge family businesses. But for the rest of us, educational qualifications and ability to do the job were supposed to be the criteria for success. Gerry Robinson is a better role model than Sir Rocco in the meritocratic, classless society that John Major claims to aspire to, having worked his way up from the bottom to head Granada.

The trouble is that the evidence on earning power and class status shows that society and the labour market are rather less mobile than anecdotes about people like Mr

Robinson suggest. Research released in January by Howard Reed and Paul Johnson at the Institute for Fiscal Studies reveals that patterns of poverty and affluence persist from one generation to another. Over half of those whose fathers were among the top 25 per cent of earners are in the same bracket themselves a generation later. In comparison, only one in eight of those whose fathers were in the bottom 25 per cent of earners have made it up to join the top earners today.

Like other academic evidence on the subject, most of the striking conclusions are about men rather than women; women's role in the labour mar-

ket has changed so much across the generations that it is more difficult to assess the different factors affecting their success. In absolute terms things have improved since the war. We all know professionals and managers - people like Gerry Robinson - whose parents were working class. But part of this is because there are far more middle class jobs available today than there were 50 years ago. An increase in opportunities for working class children has been matched equally by an increase in opportunities for middle class children. In relative terms little has changed.

Summarising their academic research in the first issue of *Prospect* last autumn, Adam Swift and Gordon Marshall argue that "more room at the top" has not been accompanied by greater equality of opportunities to get there.

Dividing occupations into salaried (professionals, managers, administrators and higher grade technicians) and non-salaried (everyone else), they find that the chances of a man from a salaried or middle-class background getting a salaried job are still more than seven times greater than those of a man with working class parents.

But this alone won't undermine the claim that Britain is meritocratic. Career success today does at least largely depend on education: the qualifications you have count for more than anything else in determining the jobs you can do, and the level of salary you will earn.

How can it be true that high academic achievers in general get the best paid jobs, but at the same time employees' fate is affected by their fathers' occupation? There are two obvious explanations. First, uncomparable as it may sound, middle class children could be more able and intelligent than their working class peers. If this is true the current distribution of jobs and rewards in the British economy could be meritocratic and efficient. Second, the middle classes could be much better at making sure their kids benefit from education - in which case opportunities at an early age are decidedly unequal.

Sussex academic Peter Saunders is an advocate of the first explanation. In research published last December, he found that IQ test results at age 11 provided a more accurate guide to a child's later success than their parents' occupation. He argues that certain models of inherited intelligence would create patterns of meritocratic economic mobility very similar to those in contemporary Britain.

But his research does not back up his meritocratic thesis. Even if he is correct in his assessment of the importance of



Family background versus meritocracy: Sir Rocco Forte (left) and Gerry Robinson, protagonists in the recent Forte battle

inherited ability, he underestimates the additional effect of family background. After taking educational qualifications into account, your father's occupation can still make a difference to your life chances.

Swift and Marshall examined whether class background affects the eventual success of people with identical qualifications. They find that among school leavers who don't get any O-levels or high-scoring GCSEs, 23 per cent of those with parents in salaried jobs still make it into the middle classes after all, compared with only 7 per

cent of those whose parents are in low skilled and manual jobs. Any parent will be aware of the different educational opportunities that children can face. It may be hard to measure with statistics, but it doesn't take much anecdotal evidence to construct a plausible hypothesis that the children of the middle classes get extra educational advantages. Anyone in a salaried occupation who wants to pass on their lifestyle to their children suspects that only the very best qualifications will be enough to secure their children's future. Stories abound about the

parents who search London, not just to avoid bad comprehensives, but to find their child "the best" school in the region. Or about the anxious mum who arranges extra after-school tuition to stimulate her five year old. Those with high levels of education and earning power are bound to find it easier to purchase or to arrange the best education for their children.

What the various studies do reveal is that the bright and brilliant can make it to the top regardless of their family background. But opportunities are clearly not yet equal. Chil-

dren with average abilities who get poor education will not fulfil their potential. Those of us in the top 20 per cent of earners need not get too smug. Sure, we didn't get where we are today through the pure power of patronage: education and hard work helped. But we didn't get our way up through a genuinely competitive labour market either. Britain is not a classless society yet, but the economic pressure to get the best people into the right jobs should mean that unequal access to opportunities becomes ever harder to sustain.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Currency	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.5278	1.5111	1.5027	1.5000	1.4875	1.4750
Canada	2.0942	2.0733	2.0536	1.9708	1.9583	1.9458
Germany	2.2594	2.2447	2.2300	1.4788	1.4663	1.4538
France	7.7798	7.7540	7.7282	1.0660	1.0535	1.0410
Italy	2.0724	2.0577	2.0430	1.9825	1.9699	1.9574
Japan	160.80	159.73	158.66	105.33	104.26	103.19
ECU	1.7633	1.7486	1.7339	1.2581	1.2456	1.2331
Belgium	46.438	46.18	45.93	1.2086	1.1961	1.1836
Denmark	8.7281	8.698	8.668	1.3731	1.3606	1.3481
Netherlands	2.2026	2.1879	2.1732	1.6557	1.6432	1.6307
Ireland	0.7929	0.78	0.77	1.5703	1.5578	1.5453
Norway	58.530	58.28	58.03	6.4376	6.4251	6.4126
Spain	16.31	16.27	16.23	12.522	12.51	12.50
Sweden	10.461	10.44	10.42	1.6845	1.6720	1.6595
Switzerland	1.0585	1.056	1.054	1.0201	1.0176	1.0151
Australia	2.0711	2.0564	2.0417	1.3633	1.3508	1.3383
Hong Kong	1.042	1.04	1.038	7.7238	7.7113	7.6988
Malaysia	3.8559	3.843	3.83	2.2536	2.2411	2.2286
New Zealand	2.2622	2.2497	2.2372	1.4008	1.3883	1.3758
Saudi Arabia	5.7295	5.717	5.704	3.7503	3.7378	3.7253
Singapore	2.3563	2.344	2.331	1.415	1.4025	1.39

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.5281	1.0000
Australia	1.5281	1.0000
Brazil	1.5281	1.0000
China	1.5281	1.0000
India	1.5281	1.0000
Indonesia	1.5281	1.0000
Japan	1.5281	1.0000
Korea	1.5281	1.0000
Malaysia	1.5281	1.0000
Philippines	1.5281	1.0000
Portugal	1.5281	1.0000
Saudi Arabia	1.5281	1.0000
Singapore	1.5281	1.0000
Taiwan	1.5281	1.0000
Thailand	1.5281	1.0000
UK	1.5281	1.0000
USA	1.5281	1.0000

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate and add to spot rate.
Dollar rates quoted as at 100.
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0991 323 3033.
Calls cost 36p per minute (cheap rate) 48p other times.

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base Rate	Discount	Prime	Discount
3 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
6 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
12 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
18 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
24 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
30 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
36 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
42 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
48 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
54 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%
60 month	3.00%	Discount	5.00%

Bond Yields

Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %	Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %
UK	8.75	7.75	Netherlands	5.12	6.12
US	5.12	6.12	Spain	10.74	9.48
Germany	5.12	6.12	Australia	8.75	9.48
France	5.12	6.12	Sweden	11.11	11.11
			EUQ QAT	9.75	6.03

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.75	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12
Local Authority	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.12

Tourist Rates

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Australia	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281
Canada	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281
France	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281
Germany	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281
Italy	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281
Japan	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281
UK	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281
USA	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281	1.5281

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Close
Long GB	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long US	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Euro	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Yen	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Gold	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Oil	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Sugar	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Wheat	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Corn	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Soybean	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Cotton	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Rubber	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Nickel	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Zinc	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Lead	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Tin	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Platinum	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Palladium	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Silver	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Copper	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Aluminium	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Nickel	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Zinc	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Lead	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Tin	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Platinum	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Palladium	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Silver	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Copper	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Aluminium	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28

Life FT-SE Index Option

Series	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900
Settle	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900
Open	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900
Close	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900
High	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900
Low	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900
Settle	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900

Energy

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Gas	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Coal	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Uranium	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Nuclear	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Wind	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Solar	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Hydro	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Geothermal	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Biomass	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Tidal	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Wave	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Ocean	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Wind	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Solar	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Hydro	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Geothermal	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Biomass	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Tidal	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Wave	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28
Long Ocean	107.28	107.27	107.28	107.28

Commodity Indices

Commodity Indexes			GSCI Indexes				
	Base=100	%Point	Trading Day	31 Dec.	%YTD	Year ago	%Chg Yr
Index	107.28	0.25		2035.50	4.00	1765.58	+10.82
Agricultural	107.28	2.61		2881.69	+1.94	2868.75	+0.45
Energy	107.28	56.43	-0.10	7131	-8.05	5751	+1.51
Industrial Metals	107.28	106.09	-0.08	1832.32	-3.24	2063.3	-9.72
Investment	107.28	175.92	+0.46	162.71	-3.71	184.00	-4.29
Precious Metals	107.28	499.56	-1.32	489.86	+1.99	473.73	+5.45

Source: Goldman Sachs & Co. GSCI is a benchmark and benchmark of Goldman Sachs & Co. (Closes as of 4 March 196)



Cook suggests a trade-off

Racing

JOHN COBB

As the odds against One Man tightened for one Tote-sponsored contest yesterday, the price against bookmakers being allowed to bet on Lottery numbers shortened dramatically at another Tote event.

One Man's position at the top of betting lists for next Thursday's Cheltenham Gold Cup has, of course, been bolstered by the injury which has forced last year's Blue Riband winner, Master Oats, to miss the race. Gordon Richards' grey is now as low as 11-10, with William Hill - a price that is easily resistible given that he is due to be put through his paces at Carlisle racecourse this morning.

And that the weather still has sufficient time to deliver suitably swampy conditions. The bookmakers have a longer and more tortuous course to complete if they are to counteract the Lottery by being able to take bets on which numbers will come up.

The suggestion, by Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, at the Tote annual lunch in London, that in the event of Labour winning the next election betting on the Lottery would be considered came with the proviso that William Hill and Ladbrokes should install the Tote Direct terminals that enable customers of the Tote, Coral and numerous independent firms to bet straight into Tote pools. That extra input could, in turn, stimulate pools

so that a regular million-pound payout bet could be established to take on the Lottery.

"Labour has set up a Working Party to examine ways to amend the Lottery with bookmaker-betting on the jackpot numbers of the issues under consideration," Cook said. "The evidence from Ireland is that such a step was successful in helping small bookmakers stay in business."

"I would argue that any measure that keeps betting shops open and keeps the public com-

ing through the door is in racing's interests.

The enormous interest in the Lottery since the nation because of its large payout has revealed racing's failure to attract a big enough pool to capture the popular imagination.

The Tote cannot offer that without more outlets. If Ladbrokes and Hills were to drop their opposition to Tote Direct terminals in their shops, Labour might be more accommodating to their desire to bet on the Lottery numbers.

"I am not suggesting anything so crude as a deal. New Labour is a gentle, non-threatening animal. I am not confident we could go five rounds in the negotiating with the likes of Tom Kelly [of the Betting Office Licensees Association]. I

am, though, suggesting that one positive attitude might prove an answer.

Lord Wyatt, the Tote's chairman, re-stated in the hullest way his outright opposition to the British Horseracing Board's ambition of taking control of the Tote. "In the words of great Lady Widdowson to us all, 'No, No, No,' he said.

Wyatt also gave a tip for the Gold Cup in Dublin. He said, "Cook, who writes a tipping column in the Glasgow Herald, offered words of caution that anyone betting at Cheltenham would do well to heed. 'I firmly believe,' he said, 'that the Government of Great Britain would be in sounder hands if it were to take control of the Tote.'"

Wyatt also gave a tip for the Gold Cup in Dublin. He said, "Cook, who writes a tipping column in the Glasgow Herald, offered words of caution that anyone betting at Cheltenham would do well to heed. 'I firmly believe,' he said, 'that the Government of Great Britain would be in sounder hands if it were to take control of the Tote.'"

Inside track to a different perspective

David Seymour advocates an alternative Festival view point

For 95 per cent of racegoers, there are only two feasible vantage points from which to witness the afternoon's events unfold - either the cheek by jowl security of the stands or the slightly quiver of the TV screen in the main bar or the hospitality chalet. But for the adventurous five per cent, on trip to the races - particularly next week's Cheltenham Festival - would be complete without at least one sortie into the vast beyond of the centre of the track to watch a race from beside a fence or hurdle.

A few leave the (relative) comfort of the terraces for the dubious privilege of waving vigorously via the cameras to a hawk-eyed relative as the field streams over the water-jump, but the real outdoor aficionado makes the effort because you only out there can you have any idea

of the awesome power of Monsieur Le Carré at an elite, or the frightenous speed with which Alderbrook flies his hurdles.

Away from the stands, it is a different spectacle altogether. No longer is it a case of a distant group of thoroughbreds and vivid jockey silks gliding smoothly round while spied through binoculars, but rather a thundering, snorting pack bearing down on each obstacle to the accompaniment of slapping whips and cursing pilots. The moments before the off are almost irrelevant from a distance but experienced at close quarters that last minute before the tapes go up for the Gold Cup is unbearably tense, and exciting.

The sceptic might object that

it is all a bit like spectating at the Tour de France three hours waiting around for five seconds' rest. But this is where tactics come in. A three mile chase on many courses will see the field jump the same fence three times.

Theo there is the question of crossing the centre of the course. With modest exertion, it is often quite possible to watch the first in the back straight and still be comfortably in *sin* for the last on the run. Cheltenham is a problem because of the dyke that runs diagonally across the course, but at Newbury it is worth taking in four fences of the Hennessy (three of them different).

Inevitably, the further away from the stands you get, the

sparser the company becomes. The water-jump at Newbury on a big day can be almost as crowded as the Goodwood but, at a track to one of the ditches at Wincanton, both far away from the winning post as they could be, usually ensures that two Red Cross officials and a fence builder are the limit of intelligent life.

But the open spaces are certainly the place to appreciate the roar of the crowd. On the same basis that in most choirs no one can hear anyone else because he is bellowing too much, it is impossible to know what noise the crowd is making when you are shouting yourself hoarse from their midst as your nap of the day lurches up the Cheltenham hill. But from the reaches of the

second-last, the crescendo engendered by a crowd of 40,000 is guaranteed to make the adrenalin rush fast - even if it cannot do the same for your rapidly weakening selection.

The determination to hold your ground, no sane punter would dream of going backfield, and some dramatic and some sad moments: Norio's Coin's geolite but firm indication that he had had enough of racing at Newbury's final ditch, Carville's Hill's monumental error at the first fence of the 1992 Gold Cup and the pulsating threefold leap at the last in the same race as Cool Ground, The Fellow and Docklands Express fought it out.

There will be one hero next week, fresh hard-luck stories for sure. Will I be watching from the grandstand or will the Barbour be my only protection against the weather's worst? No contest.

RESULTS

LEICESTER

2.20: 1. A WHIRLY CITIZEN (Mr R Hicks) 9-2, 2. Phantom 10-1, 3. Freddie Fox 15-1, 4. 15-1, 5. 10-1, 6. 20-1, 7. 10-1, 8. 10-1, 9. 10-1, 10. 10-1, 11. 10-1, 12. 10-1, 13. 10-1, 14. 10-1, 15. 10-1, 16. 10-1, 17. 10-1, 18. 10-1, 19. 10-1, 20. 10-1, 21. 10-1, 22. 10-1, 23. 10-1, 24. 10-1, 25. 10-1, 26. 10-1, 27. 10-1, 28. 10-1, 29. 10-1, 30. 10-1, 31. 10-1, 32. 10-1, 33. 10-1, 34. 10-1, 35. 10-1, 36. 10-1, 37. 10-1, 38. 10-1, 39. 10-1, 40. 10-1, 41. 10-1, 42. 10-1, 43. 10-1, 44. 10-1, 45. 10-1, 46. 10-1, 47. 10-1, 48. 10-1, 49. 10-1, 50. 10-1, 51. 10-1, 52. 10-1, 53. 10-1, 54. 10-1, 55. 10-1, 56. 10-1, 57. 10-1, 58. 10-1, 59. 10-1, 60. 10-1, 61. 10-1, 62. 10-1, 63. 10-1, 64. 10-1, 65. 10-1, 66. 10-1, 67. 10-1, 68. 10-1, 69. 10-1, 70. 10-1, 71. 10-1, 72. 10-1, 73. 10-1, 74. 10-1, 75. 10-1, 76. 10-1, 77. 10-1, 78. 10-1, 79. 10-1, 80. 10-1, 81. 10-1, 82. 10-1, 83. 10-1, 84. 10-1, 85. 10-1, 86. 10-1, 87. 10-1, 88. 10-1, 89. 10-1, 90. 10-1, 91. 10-1, 92. 10-1, 93. 10-1, 94. 10-1, 95. 10-1, 96. 10-1, 97. 10-1, 98. 10-1, 99. 10-1, 100. 10-1, 101. 10-1, 102. 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sport

Hunter up and running for England full-back berth

It will be a rare privilege to see Jonathan Davies and Robert Jones reunited at half-back for the Barbarians at Northampton this afternoon, but the really significant presence at Franklin's Gardens will be on the other side: that of the reluctant England wing and would-be full-back Ian Hunter.

After another of the protracted periods of inactivity – this one the most worrisome of all – that have dogged his career, Hunter's reappearance in a full Northampton side masquerading as East Midlands is an event to make Jack Rowell, the England manager, take careful notice. England want an attacking full-back? Northampton have one.

By next season, Hunter, 28,

a graphic artist in Wellingborough, expects to be back in the international reckoning, although for now he will rest content with the pure pleasure of playing rugby again. Not long ago he could have been excused for wondering if he would; he was laid low by a virus in September which put him in hospital for a fortnight and caused him to lose a stone.

Given the multifarious mishaps that have befallen him since he first played for England, this was a final, cruel indignity. "It has given me a perspective on rugby and life," he philosophised yesterday.

There is, after all, more to life than sticking on a jersey and a pair of boots on a Saturday.

"I'm not fatalistic, I'm optimistic but also a realist, and I

Northampton's game with the Barbarians this afternoon could provide a significant boost for Jack Rowell. **Steve Bale reports**

wouldn't dare imagine nothing else could go wrong. Rugby isn't a game where you can say you will never be injured again. I've been unfortunate and now, once again, I just want to get on with it."

Hunter first represented England, out of position on the wing, against Canada in October 1992, since when he had a knee injury followed by two operations, an eye injury, a dislocated shoulder which caused his return after a week of the 1993 Lions tour of New Zealand, a pulled hamstring and then more knee trouble which meant a third operation in 1994.

In consequence, he had to withdraw from that year's England tour of South Africa, going on to miss most of last season but still winning selection for the World Cup, where games against Western Samoa and France took him to seven caps, only one where he likes it at full-back. By the start of this season, he had never felt fitter.

Hunter takes up the sad story: "Because I had missed so much of last season, when I came back from the World Cup I decided to train hard without having any break. Things went really well until after our first league game

against Northern Irish when I started feeling flu symptoms and having problems with my knee. A few days later I could barely get out of bed."

When Hunter then had keyhole surgery to check out the knee there was nothing wrong, but the flu symptoms lingered and when he attempted to resume training his temperature shot up and he was admitted to hospital with what was initially thought to be a post-surgical infection.

"Instead, they found I had a virus and all I could do was rest totally. They couldn't give me any time-scale; it was completely unpredictable and could

have taken four or five days, four or five weeks or four or five months to clear up. At the same time, my weight went down from 15st to 14st.

"The harder you train, the lower your immune system afterwards, leaving you susceptible while you are recovering to picking things up because you have exhausted all the energy in your body. There had been a virus going round the club and I duly picked it up. What a virus will do is attack the weakest area of your body – that's why both my knees were affected."

Hunter has never been anything but resilient – he has had to be – and a return to light training by the end of December was followed by a gentle reintroduction to rugby train-

ing by the end of January and full training in mid-February. After two comeback games for the Northampton second team, an appearance in last Friday's pre-international win at Gales brought him a try and two conversions.

Today, the profile rises and if this is not yet the beginning of a revived ambition, then next season – when Northampton will be back in the First Division – most certainly will be. "I was disappointed not to have a chance at full-back in the World Cup and I still have to prove I am worthy of being selected there," he said. "But I believe without a shadow of a doubt that at my best I can win a place as England full-back."

"I'm not expecting to go-



Hunter: Seven England caps

out and set the world alight against the Barbarians, because I'm not at that level. But in the new professional game the selectors cannot afford to ignore people playing to the best of their ability, and my belief is that if I'm playing like that week in week out for Northampton next season, I should get selected." Are you listening, Jack Rowell?

Jordan set fair for first victory

Derick Allsop on the test for Martin Brundle's new team as the Formula One season starts on Sunday

The freshly applied all-gold livery is appropriate as well as lucrative. This splash of sunlight heralds the dawn of a new era, a coming of age for the erstwhile wet-behind-the-ears kids on the block. Jordan are green no more.

Five years into life as a Formula One team, they have grown to understand the demands and responsibilities of motor racing's senior order. Now, they admit, it is time they asserted themselves as mature and successful members of the grand prix community.

Eddie Jordan, the man who brought his racing dream from Dublin to England, who won just about all there was to win in the lower formulae and then swaggered into the adult world of sport and business with his emerald-clad merry men, prepares for Sunday's opening race of another world championship season, in Melbourne, a changed and chastened leader.

He said: "We have had to re-think our attitude and approach to Formula One. We have found out just how tough it is to break into that top group of teams and there is no question about it, the pressure is on us to deliver this season."

"But I feel we are now ready to do that. We have learned, we have developed and we are go-

ing about this the right way. We have the funding and the organisation. We have to win our first race this year and I believe we will do that."

Jordan, based at Silverstone, made an immediate impact on Formula One. Their uncomplicated but effective cars, powered by a Ford engine, carried them to fifth place in their maiden season. It was also the first grand prix car raced by Michael Schumacher.

The prospect of a factory deal lured Jordan into partnership with Yamaha in 1992, but the move backfired. They mustered only one point all season. Another switch, to Hart, lifted them back to fifth after two years, yet they slipped to sixth with Peugeot last season.

A second campaign with the French company ought to be more productive and the sponsorship of Benson and Hedges has provided them with the means to operate, as well as think, big.

Jordan said: "We have done everything but win a race to this point. We've made the podium, had second and third in one race, but making that next step is the big one – and the toughest. We have found out the hard way that getting to the top takes time. We have had to reassess our targets."



Eddie Jordan: "We have to win our first race this season and I believe we will do that"

Photograph: Mike Hewitt/Allsop

He suspects Jackie Stewart, launching a grand prix team next year – ironically in tandem with Ford – will encounter similar difficulties and frustrations.

"It's good for Formula One to have someone of Jackie's stature coming in and I am sure he'll put together a good package," Jordan said. "But it is unrealistic to expect his team to start winning races almost straight away."

"It took Williams something like 15 years to become a major team, and McLaren and Benetton were also around for several years before they had any success."

"I am sure Jackie will have to go through the same process."

He'll find Formula One a different world."

The other significant difference at Jordan this season is the presence of the English driver, Martin Brundle, in place of Northern Ireland's Eddie Irvine, alongside the young Brazilian, Rubens Barrichello. Jordan believes Brundle's influence will prove beneficial to the team as a whole, and to Barrichello in particular.

He explained: "Martin is already having a great impact, and in fact, is probably giving us more input than we can cope with. He has a tremendous will of knowledge and he is bringing that to us."

"We were rubbishised by some

for taking on Martin. We are, after all, supposed to be the team that gives young drivers their chance. But we can't be a kindergarten all our lives, and we were perhaps missing something – the kind of experience he can bring."

"People question Martin's qualifying, but he is a hard and very fine racer. Remember he beat Senna eight times when he was in Formula Three with us, in '83. With only one qualifying session and the situations that can lumber you with, you need two good racers."

"We've almost had Martin back a couple of times before. He responds to a loving family. He thrives on it. He is a solid

team man, and no longer has the fire burning in him for the championship. If he wins it, fine, but at the age of 26 he doesn't feel he has to."

"He's helping Rubens, who realises that, last year, Rubens was vying with Irvine, looking after number one. They were too similar, too busy with their own agendas. We felt we had to split them for the good of the team. Rubens is like us, at a critical stage. He also knows he has to perform this year."

Jordan sees men under pressure all about him – Damon Hill and Williams-Renault, everyone at Ferrari, everyone at McLaren-Mercedes, everyone at Benetton-Renault. He has a

bunch one of his former drivers, Jean Alesi, will come through it ahead of the pack and win for Benetton."

A race win, rather than championship success, will suffice for Jordan this year. Indications in winter testing were encouraging, but then teams have been known to produce distorted performances to secure sponsors' signatures.

Jordan, in any case, is ready to be judged from Sunday onwards. "It's what happens from now on that matters. We've got 16 races to prove ourselves, and we are not hiding from that. We are facing up to it, to the test and to the truth. And we're determined to deliver."

Only the best for Dubai's flyer

Stuart Alexander on a powerboating champion's plans to defend his world title

Saeed al Tayer is a world champion in a dangerous, glamorous sport needing considerable skill and daring to harness huge forces. The images of power, speed and brute force excite a worldwide intake of breath. Yet he is hardly known at all.

Al Tayer, who runs the Land Rover/Range-Rover and Ferrari concessions in Dubai and the northern Emirates, is outgoing, even slightly boisterous. Strapped into a specially sprung seat to prevent broken legs or compacted vertebrae, as the hull smashes into waves at up to 145mph, the world powerboating champion is also a fierce competitor.

His gleaming, royal blue, 43ft vessel was given a last dip yesterday in the waters of the Arabian Gulf. All other noises at the Victory team's base at the Dubai International Marine Club were drowned out by the deep-throated rasp of its twin eight-litre American V8 engines, with over 1,800 horsepower between them.

The catamaran was then lifted gently back on to its liveried, custom-built truck and trailer so that it can be shipped to Italy on Friday on its way to Cuba for the first grand prix of the season, scheduled for the end of April in Havana. With it goes a new second boat, also with American engines, and a modified third boat with Lamborghini engines. They will be transferred to a third new boat as soon as it is ready to leave the modern building and engineering facility less than a mile away from the Dubai club.

Each boat has a fully equipped engineering workshop truck, and there is a spare truck for pick-ups and deliveries and a couple of fast support boats. The Emirates team travels in style to places like Marbella, Rome and Gallipoli.

It also sets off with a little uncertainty this year. Both the Dubai and the Italian boats are due to be shipped together to Cuba. At the moment that Grand Prix is still on, but there are worries both that the team might be walking into a situation where their equipment could be seized for political bargaining purposes. There is also the small matter of diplomatic relations with the United States.

The Arab team and the Italians have turned elite powerboat racing almost into a private war. The principal aim, of putting the name of Dubai on the map of the modern world through sporting success, seems almost to have been undermined by that very success.

This is because the sort of budget the Dubai syndicate can wield might easily be blamed for frightening away other potential competitors, who until recently included among their number a British world champion, Steve Curtis.

The managing director of the Victory team, Khalaf Harib, who won the championship himself in 1993, speaks highly of Curtis as "a great competitor", one with whom he once had a finish-line collision which caused Curtis's boat to do a backwards somersault. "I wish he was back," he said.

Usually the Dubai drivers are partnered by Italians or Americans, though there is a strong basis of Class 2 racing in the country through which the top drivers can emerge. And their boat-building facility is populated by the pick of American and European builders, engineers and test mechanics. The very best resources for the best powerboat racer – even if he is almost completely unknown.

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Wardley sisters ahead

Sailing
STUART ALEXANDER reports from Dubai

Two British sisters were flying high in the semi-finals of the Hobie Cat 16 World Championships here yesterday. Nicola Wardley is crewing for the Australian Bob Engwirda, who is in first place after six races. Liz is in third place with the Papua New Guinea-based Australian Mark Laruffa, sandwiching the South African pair William and Lucinda Edwards.

Coming up fast, however, are the favourites. The South African Blaine Dadds, who has won his national championship nine times and been second five

times at World Championships, is lying fifth out of the 112. One place behind is Brazil's Claudio Cardoso, silver medalist in Mexico last year, and in eighth place is the defending world champion, Aaron Worrall, also from Australia.

The best placed British are Matthew Eccles and Philip Hildyard who are 40th and need to perform well today in what may only be one more race before the cut to the final 56 is made for tomorrow and Friday. At 62nd are the seeded Mark and Victoria Farrow, while Stephen Park and Ruth Verrier-Jones, at 65th, may have found the jostling winds too much for their relatively lightweight combination.

WEEKEND POOLS FIXTURES

FA Carling Premiership

1. Everton v Coventry
2. West Ham v Middlesbrough
3. Aston Villa v Ipswich
4. Arsenal v Manchester United
5. Tottenham v Blackburn
6. Liverpool v Nottingham Forest
7. Chelsea v Wimbledon
8. Manchester City v Southampton
9. Leeds v Liverpool
10. Newcastle v Arsenal

Endsleigh Insurance League

1. Barnley v Ipswich
2. Crystal Palace v West Bromwich
3. Millwall v Norwich
4. Sheffield Utd v Stoke
5. Sunderland v Derby
6. Tottenham v Birmingham
7. Watford v Oxford
8. Wolves v Reading
9. Luton v Charlton
10. Portsmouth v QPR

Second Division

1. Blackpool v Notts County
2. Brentford v Wrexham
3. Bristol City v Burnley
4. Chesterfield v Brighton
5. Crewe v Bradford
6. Hull City v Bournemouth
7. Luton v Barnsley
8. Millwall v Reading
9. Peterborough v Walsley
10. Stockport v Peterborough

Third Division

1. Barnet v Chester
2. Cambridge Utd v Plymouth
3. Cardiff v Fulham
4. Colchester Utd v Luton
5. Darlington v Torquay
6. Exeter v Doncaster
7. Gillingham v Preston
8. Hartlepool v Mansfield
9. Lincoln v Millwall
10. Northampton v Scarborough

GM Vauxhall Conference

1. Aston Villa v Wolves
2. Barnsley v Ipswich
3. Bolton v Burnley
4. Bournemouth v Farnborough
5. Brentford v Wrexham
6. Bristol City v Burnley
7. Burnley v Ipswich
8. Charlton v Norwich
9. Colchester Utd v Luton
10. Crewe v Bradford

Isle League Premier Division

1. Barnet v Ipswich
2. Crystal Palace v West Bromwich
3. Millwall v Norwich
4. Sheffield Utd v Stoke
5. Sunderland v Derby
6. Tottenham v Birmingham
7. Watford v Oxford
8. Wolves v Reading
9. Luton v Charlton
10. Portsmouth v QPR

Scottish League

1. Celtic v Rangers
2. Dundee v Aberdeen
3. Dundee Utd v St Johnstone
4. Falkirk v Motherwell
5. Hamilton v Stirling Albion
6. Inverness v Ross County
7. Kilmarnock v Hearts
8. Livingston v Dundee Utd
9. Motherwell v Dundee
10. Stirling Albion v Inverness

Third Division

1. Aberdeen v Livingston
2. Dundee v Aberdeen
3. Dundee Utd v St Johnstone
4. Falkirk v Motherwell
5. Hamilton v Stirling Albion
6. Inverness v Ross County
7. Kilmarnock v Hearts
8. Livingston v Dundee Utd
9. Motherwell v Dundee
10. Stirling Albion v Inverness

Ballesteros tables his Olympic bid

Golf

Seve Ballesteros, who resumes his career in Morocco tomorrow after a break of nearly six months, is pushing for golf to become an Olympic sport again.

Ballesteros has spoken to the International Olympic Committee president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, a fellow Spaniard, arguing for the sport to be included in the Sydney Games in 2000. It last appeared in 1904.

"I told him that including golf in the Olympics was not only of interest to golf, but also to the IOC," he said. "It could be good business, and the Eastern bloc countries would start to be interested in golf. It would boil down to us having to play an extra week and that's it. It would be just another tournament."

There had been talk of golf returning to the Games this summer – it might even have been played at Augusta, home of the Masters – but the IOC ruled against it in January 1993. The Northumberland Challenge – the first new European tour event in England for eight years – is to be held at Salsley Hall from 13 to 16 June.

TODAY'S NUMBER

3

The number of opening partners that Sachin Tendulkar has had in the five games India have played in the cricket World Cup. Navjot Sidhu became the latest against Zimbabwe today.

Sampras to miss Cup

Tennis

Pete Sampras has opted out of the United States' defence of the Davis Cup until the final stages, stating that the competition ought to be suspended during an Olympic Games year, writes John Roberts.

"I honestly don't think the Davis Cup should be played in an Olympic year," the Wimbledon champion and world No 1 said yesterday. "It should maybe be played every two years."

Sampras, who helped his country triumph against Russia in Moscow last December, missed the opening round match against Mexico in California a month ago and will not

play in the quarter-final in the Czech Republic on 5 April. He has told the American captain, Tom Gullikson, that he would be available, if the team advances to the semi-finals.

"Last year I paid the price in some ways with the travelling and playing a lot of tennis, and this year I just felt it was too much," Sampras said.

He considers that his quest for the French Open last June was handicapped by his participation in the Davis Cup quarter-final in Italy immediately after the Lipton Championships in Florida in March. "I felt it hurt me out a little bit," he said. "I just wish there was a better schedule to enable us to be more committed to playing the Davis Cup."

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 unless stated
EUROPEAN CUP
QUARTER-FINALS
Real Madrid v Juventus
Borussia Dortmund v Ajax
PSV Eindhoven v Feyenoord
FC Barcelona v Tottenham
AC Milan v Lazio
Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund
Juventus v Lazio
Real Madrid v Tottenham
Borussia Dortmund v Bayern Munich
PSV Eindhoven v Feyenoord
FC Barcelona v Tottenham
AC Milan v Lazio
Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund

League of Wales

Cardiff City v Swansea
Newport v Wrexham
Merthyr Tydfil v Carmarthen
Bridgend v Barry
Gwent v Newport
Haverhill v Carmarthen
Cardiff City v Swansea
Newport v Wrexham
Merthyr Tydfil v Carmarthen
Bridgend v Barry
Gwent v Newport
Haverhill v Carmarthen

Football League

1. Arsenal v Manchester United
2. Liverpool v Tottenham
3. Chelsea v Wimbledon
4. Manchester City v Southampton
5. Leeds v Liverpool
6. Newcastle v Arsenal
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8. Aston Villa v Wolves
9. Burnley v Ipswich
10. Bournemouth v Farnborough

Newcastle
red n

Most fixed
36 place

made to wait

Henman H

Parke Post

مكتبة الأمل

Newcastle fearful of red menace

The country's footballing spotlight now moves to Manchester. How will the contenders react? Having trailed Newcastle United all season, Manchester United will go top of the Premiership if they win at Queen's Park Rangers on 16 March.

Form suggests they will do just that and, while Newcastle can retake the lead at home to West Ham two days later, the pair are likely to trade places until April Fool's Day. That is when Newcastle, who will be second if both sides have won their games, visit Anfield.

Enter the third force, Liverpool, like Manchester United, are peaking when it matters. By 1 April they could well be

Glenn Moore sees a difficult fortnight ahead for Kevin Keegan

level with Newcastle (they have a trio of home games and one away before then).

Newcastle were verbally defiant on Monday night, but the body language betrayed them. Kevin Keegan's natural confidence was muted, his chairman's customary ebullience dimmed.

"It is still ours to win," said Sir John Hall, when press and public surrounded him as Monday night turned to Tuesday

morning. He then, tellingly, took a long-term view. "It is not the end of the world. The future is ours. We are here a year early and we will be dominating British football for the next 10 years." Judging by Old Trafford's growing stature, and the presence in Monday's 14 of six youth products, the future is red. So, too, is the present unless Keegan can lift his men.

While most recent champions have survived being beaten by their nearest challengers, Newcastle may be developing a complex about Manchester United. They are the only team Newcastle have not beaten since returning to the top division, and, after Monday's first half, they must wonder if they ever will. The confidence clearly drained away after Eric Cantona's goal, just as it coursed into the visitors' veins.

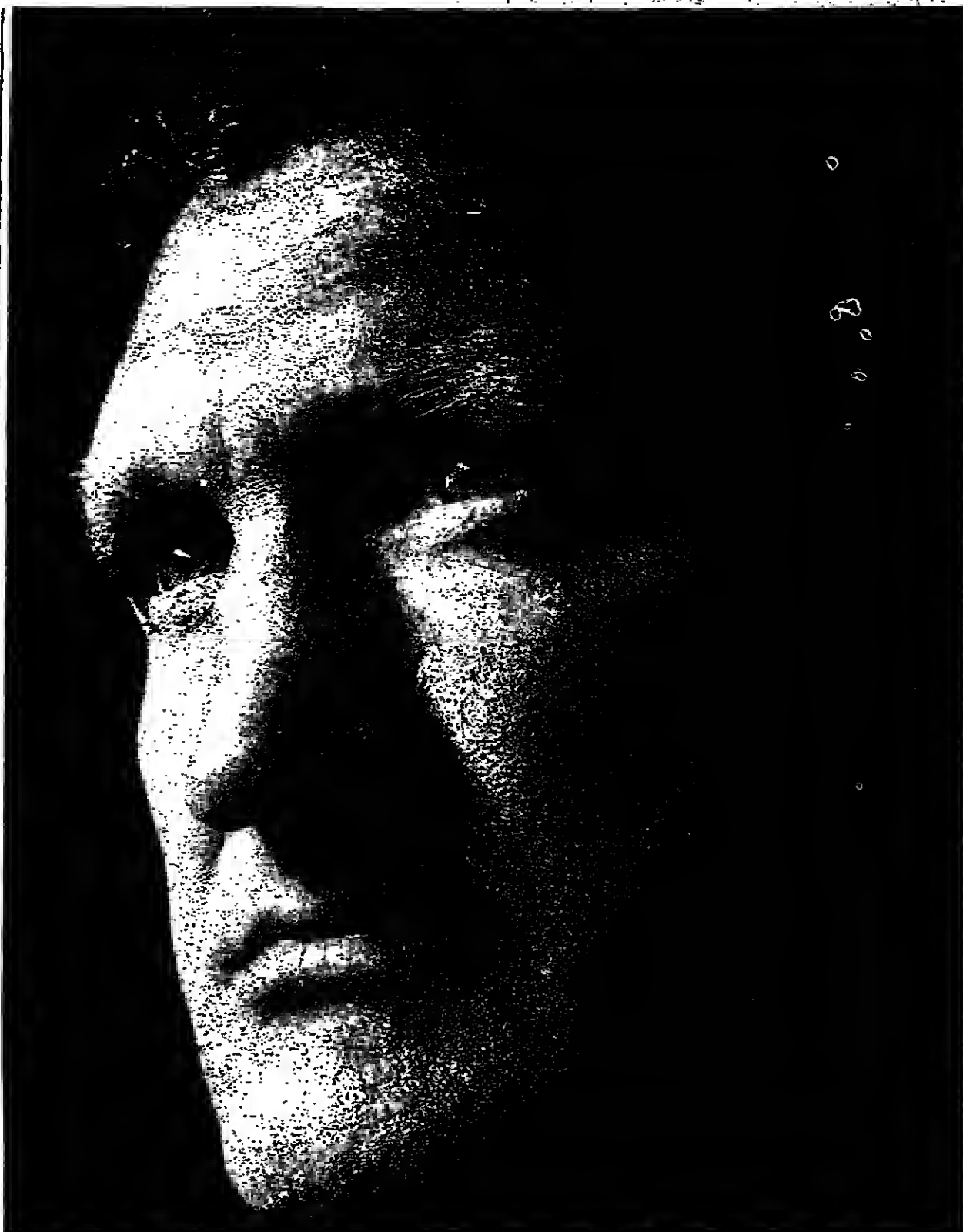
While both his opponents are now embroiled in the FA Cup, Keegan has 12 days in which to restore belief. It might be a good time to take the squad away, to Spain or somewhere like it, to recuperate and recharge. While there, a few video showings of the first half, during which Newcastle's pace and movement bewildered Manchester, may help — but Les Ferdinand will have to leave the room first.

The striker never looked like scoring from a succession of chances — but in his defence only one came to his head, and then he was not coming on to the ball. It would have been a good night for Alan Shearer.

Without Keith Gillespie on the right Newcastle lack balance and crosses, while Faustino Asprilla, with his eye for a pass and his quicksilver feet, duplicates Peter Beardsley rather than than Ferdinand or Gillespie. For all his quality an FA suspension, for the head-but and elbow on Keith Curle, may prove a disguised blessing for the leaders.

Then there is the defence. Who will be dropped when Darren Pescock returns? Perhaps Philippe Albert could move to left-back. As at Old Trafford John Beresford is missing, drawn into the centre when it mattered. Yet this is no time to experiment — as the uncertainty with three central defenders has illustrated.

Plenty, then, for Keegan to ponder as he awaits a return to the fray. Newcastle are a long way from being finished but, though David Batty was supposed to be the last piece of the jigsaw, they are not the finished article either.



Joe Bugner: 'I'm more relaxed now and ready to give young Scott a few lessons'

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Bugner back to talk a good fight

Clive White hears some familiar sounds from a 46-year-old British heavyweight

Even Muhammad Ali in his prime would have been pressed to live with Joe Bugner yesterday — as far as talking a good fight goes, that is.

Boxing's latest fighting granddaddy, just off the plane after a 23-hour flight from Australia, looked in surprisingly good shape, physically as well as mentally, as he sparred with his old media mates of two decades ago at the Café Royale in London yesterday. Let's hope he is still in the same condition after the latest of his comeback on 16 March.

The danger to Bugner lies not so much in the punching power of his opponent, the little-known British and Commonwealth champion, Scott Welch, whom he meets at the Deutschland Hall in Berlin, as the temptation to carry on boxing at the age of 46 should he win. But since the fight is on the same night as not only Bruno-Tyson, but Naseem Hamed's first defence of his World Boxing Or-

ganisation featherweight championship against Said Lalai, there is every chance that it could go completely unnoticed outside of Berlin's backstreets.

Thanks to George Forman, the prospect of fighting granddaddy is not as preposterous as it might be. Indeed it was hard not to see the funny side of this particular match, given that Welch owns two old people's homes on the South Coast ("I'm used to dealing with old people").

The affable old champ took it all in good humour, though he was bitter about the British Boxing Board of Control's refusal to grant him a licence to fight in this country. The Board have said they will review their decision if he wins. The Budapest-born Bugner was never taken to his adopted country's bosom like Our Enemy and be-

lieves that "one or two at the board" still have the needle with him for beating Henry Cooper in that controversial contest, the 25th anniversary of which he will mark with the fight against Welch, who was two at the time.

"Cooper walked in my shadow as a fighter," Bugner said. "Carrying a couple of stones more, at 18 and a half, than in his halcyon days when he fought very creditably against the likes of Ali and Joe Frazier (whom he still believes he beat at Earls Court in '73), Bugner sees this undercard match as a mere stepping stone to the likes of Tyson (shudder the thought), Bruno and Bruce Seldon. "I would love to eventually fight Bruno again because I believe I was done an injustice in our fight at White Hart Lane nine years ago," Bugner said. "He

was allowed to get away with things that were totally out of order. I reckon he must have hit me about seven times on the back of my head without the referee intervening once."

Never in love with the game, Bugner is a gentle giant who only ever produced his best when riled or hurt by an opponent, the basic misanthropic stance. He put it down to pre-fight nerves that he never really punched his full weight. "I'm more relaxed now," he said, "and ready to give young Scott a few lessons." For Bugner's sake, it is to be hoped he will be able to see the sucker punch coming rather better than he did at yesterday's press conference.

"What was the worst loss you ever had, Joe," Welch enquired respectfully.

"Against Ron Lyle in 1977, in Las Vegas," replied Bugner. "I got the beating of my life."

"Be careful you don't get any flashbacks," came back Welch.

McCoist fixed on Euro 96 place

Ally McCoist, the injury-hit 33-year-old Rangers striker, is determined to lead the front for club and country this season. "You don't need to be Mas-trem to know that you have to be playing regularly and scoring to be one of our strikers for Euro 96," McCoist said at the end of Scotland's two-day squad get-together at Troon's Marine Highland Hotel yesterday. "I think I can do that between now and the end of the season. My hunger and desire is still there, rest assured of that."

Unlike his recent run as a guest captain on *Question of Sport*, McCoist had all the right answers so much so that he used a simple administrative exercise to make his point to Brown.

Scotland's leading players were asked for their favoured shirt number in case they make manager Craig Brown's final selection. "I put down No 9 as my top jersey — and also as my second preference. If that doesn't get the message across, nothing will!" McCoist said.

An appearance against Australia in three weeks' time would land McCoist a place in the Scottish Football Association's Hall of Fame for players with 50 caps. However, McCoist has started only two matches for Rangers in 1996 with a series of nagging injuries.

In his 13 years at Ibrox, he has seen off a couple of dozen rival strikers — from Mark Falco to Oleg Salenko — and had a warning for latest £1.5m arrival from Denmark, Erik Bo Andersen.

Partick made to wait over appeals

Partick Thistle will have to wait until today to learn if two of their players have been successful in appeals against suspension. The Scottish Football Association's referee disciplinary committee yesterday investigated suspension of Rod McDonald 15 Steve Pittman following incidents in a Premier Division match against Rangers. The ref-

eree Jim McGilvray, who has since resigned, cautioned McDonald at the interval for crossing himself as he left the pitch.

McDonald received a further booking during the game and was sent off, but is appealing against the first yellow card. Pittman, who was a spectator, was given a red card three times for his comments to the referee.

The Dunfermline assistant manager, Dick Campbell, has been banned from the dug-out until the end of the season after comments made to the referee in a match against Airdrie.

Cydebank and the West of Scotland rugby club are involved in talks which could lead to them both moving to a new stadium in Glasgow.

Le Roux is sent off again on his return

Rugby Union

The former Springbok prop, Johan le Roux, was sent off four days after returning from a 19-month suspension as Transvaal lost 13-9 to the Australian Capital Territory in a Super-12 match yesterday.

Le Roux was dismissed by the referee, Wayne Erickson, five minutes into the second half after allegedly hitting the opposing hooker, Marco Caputo, who left the field with blood streaming from a gashed forehead but returned after treatment.

Le Roux, 34, was given his ban after biting the ear of the New Zealand captain, Sean Fitzpatrick, during a Test against the All Blacks in July 1994 — he was sent home from the tour and ruled out of last year's World Cup in South Africa. He was expected to appear before a Super-12 tournament disciplinary committee yesterday, before Transvaal flew to New Zealand for their next Super-12 match against Otago on Saturday.

The Transvaal and South Africa coach, Kitch Christie, said Le Roux had retaliated after having his nose broken by an ACT player, but he added that the player would be sent home if the disciplinary committee found him guilty of foul play. "He has a broken nose, whether he was hit first or hit second he has come off second best and the team has come off third best," Christie said.

The Springbok and Transvaal hooker, James Dalton, has lost an appeal against a two-match suspension after dismissal in a Super-12 match last Friday.

Henman hits new heights

Tennis

Tim Henman, ranked No 79 in the world, had one of the best wins of his career when he beat Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands 7-6, 7-6 in the first round of the ATP Tour event in Rotterdam yesterday.

Henman, the 21-year-old first-time break 8-6 and the second 11-9 against the world No 22.

Players gain bonus points for beating higher-ranked players so Henman could go above his previous best world ranking of 78 when the next list is published on Monday.

Jeremy Bates, the former British No 1 from Surrey, and Southampton's Chris Wilkinson both won their opening matches in the ATP Challenger in Stockholm in convincing style.

Bates, now 33 and intending

Parke postpones comeback

Squash

England's Simon Parke, who has just completed a course of chemotherapy for testicular cancer, has delayed his return to international competition.

The Nottingham-based 23-year-old has decided the next two major tournaments, the Equitable Life finals of the Hic-Tec PSA Super Series in Hatfield followed by the Leeke's British Open in Cardiff in the next four weeks, have come too soon.

"I had hoped to get straight back into action," the England No 2 said. "I have kept up my practice since surgery for the removal of a tumour in January and a course of chemotherapy since."

"But the chemo destroys

Athletics

Britain have lost a third 400 metres runner from the European Indoor Championships in Stockholm this weekend. Guy Butler pulled out yesterday with a leg injury, joining Mark Hyton and Melanie Neer on the sidelines.

The sprinters Guyton and Donny Monaghan, who were in the top four overall times on the American indoor grand prix circuit.

Basketball

STADIUM ALL-STAR CHAMPIONSHIPS (England) Basketball: 1. England 74-63, 2. Scotland 63-54, 3. Wales 54-45, 4. Northern Ireland 45-34, 5. Republic of Ireland 34-25, 6. Jersey 25-16, 7. Gibraltar 16-10, 8. Channel Islands 10-5, 9. Isle of Man 5-0, 10. Guernsey 0-0.

WOMEN'S ALL-STAR CHAMPIONSHIPS (Scotland) Basketball: 1. Scotland 74-63, 2. England 63-54, 3. Wales 54-45, 4. Northern Ireland 45-34, 5. Republic of Ireland 34-25, 6. Jersey 25-16, 7. Gibraltar 16-10, 8. Channel Islands 10-5, 9. Isle of Man 5-0, 10. Guernsey 0-0.

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SPORT

EDDIE JORDAN

Ready to win at last

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JOE BUGNER

Talking a good fight

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Schmeichel inspired by past failure

Football

Peter Schmeichel, who defied Newcastle with a string of saves in Monday's enthralling match, still bears the scars of Manchester United's last-kick failure against Blackburn a year ago.

The memory has spurred him, and the rest of Alex Ferguson's team, to rescue what looked to be a lost cause at Christmas when they trailed Newcastle by 10 points.

Six successive League wins, crowned by Eric Cantona's goal which shattered Newcastle's aura of invincibility at St James' Park, have (rumoured that lead to a bare, precarious point.

"Now we can only lose it," Schmeichel said. "We still need help from one or two teams but when you look at Newcastle's run-in I am sure we will get it.

"We've been in this situation before. Twice we've come out winners, twice we've been losers

in the last four seasons. Most of this team experienced losing it on the last day and I can tell you it's not a nice feeling. It is horrible and makes you determined that it's never going to happen to you again.

"Newcastle have not really been in the situation when you reach March and April and the title is being decided, when you are running out of games and you have to keep pulling out the results. We've been there, we know exactly what it's like and that's our great advantage over Newcastle now. We are really fired up for it."

United's schedule is much the easier, mainly matches against relegation fodder, while Kevin Keegan must take a Newcastle team now gnawed by self-doubt to Anfield, Highfield, Ewood Park and Elland Road.

If Newcastle go the way of Malcolm Allison's 1972 Manchester City side - five points clear in mid-March and losers to Derby by a solitary point

come May - the title may not end up in Manchester.

Schmeichel, in fact, considers Liverpool, five points adrift with a game in hand, to be the main threat. "They are playing extremely well. They are very much in it and we've both rammed home the message to Newcastle that titles don't come easy," he said.

The keeper also praised United's youngsters. "These kids are very, very special," he said. "You can't expect them all to go through nine months of top-class football without dips in form. Their ability is obvious but the way they have coped with the mental strain too is fantastic. They have kept us going through all the problems with injuries and suspensions this season."

"It's a great example of the confidence and attitude in the team than when we lose Gary Pallister, one of our best players, just before the kick-off we still go out there and beat the top team."

David Batty, however, still maintains that Newcastle can recover. The midfielder, who had to endure a losing debut after his £3.75m transfer from Blackburn Rovers, said: "We wanted a least a point, but it wasn't to be, but we're still a point ahead with 10 games to go and while of course it was a setback it isn't a problem. I've only been here less than a week but we've definitely got the players and the resolve. There's no pressure whatsoever in the changing room. We're just told to go out and play and that's the key to winning."

"The important thing is that it's got to be like water off a duck's back for us. We've got to go out and win our next game and show Monday was no big deal - whatever people might write."

It certainly was a big deal for the bookmakers, who changed their odds dramatically. Ladbrokes make Manchester United 6-5 favourites just weeks after Newcastle were an unbackable 5-1 on. William Hill offer just 8-1 against Ferguson becoming the first manager to complete a double of League and FA Cup doubles.

Newcastle, the morning after, page 23

Forest fans in custody after street violence

Two nights of violence in Munich led to 20 British football fans being remanded in custody for a week yesterday. A further 39 were being held by German police for questioning and were not expected to be released until after last night's UEFA Cup match between Nottingham Forest and Bayern Munich.

Security was tight, and about 400 police with horses and dogs at Munich station greeted the arrival of an estimated 1,400 Forest fans. A further 1,000 security officers were on duty at Bayern's Olympic Stadium.

A court remanded the 20 fans in custody on charges of bodily harm, breach of the peace and resisting arrest, mostly relating to a pub fight and street scuffles on Sunday night. Two policemen were hurt.

A spokeswoman at the British Consulate said that 32 of those arrested are likely to be released without charge after the match. The other seven, who were involved in an incident at the railway station, during

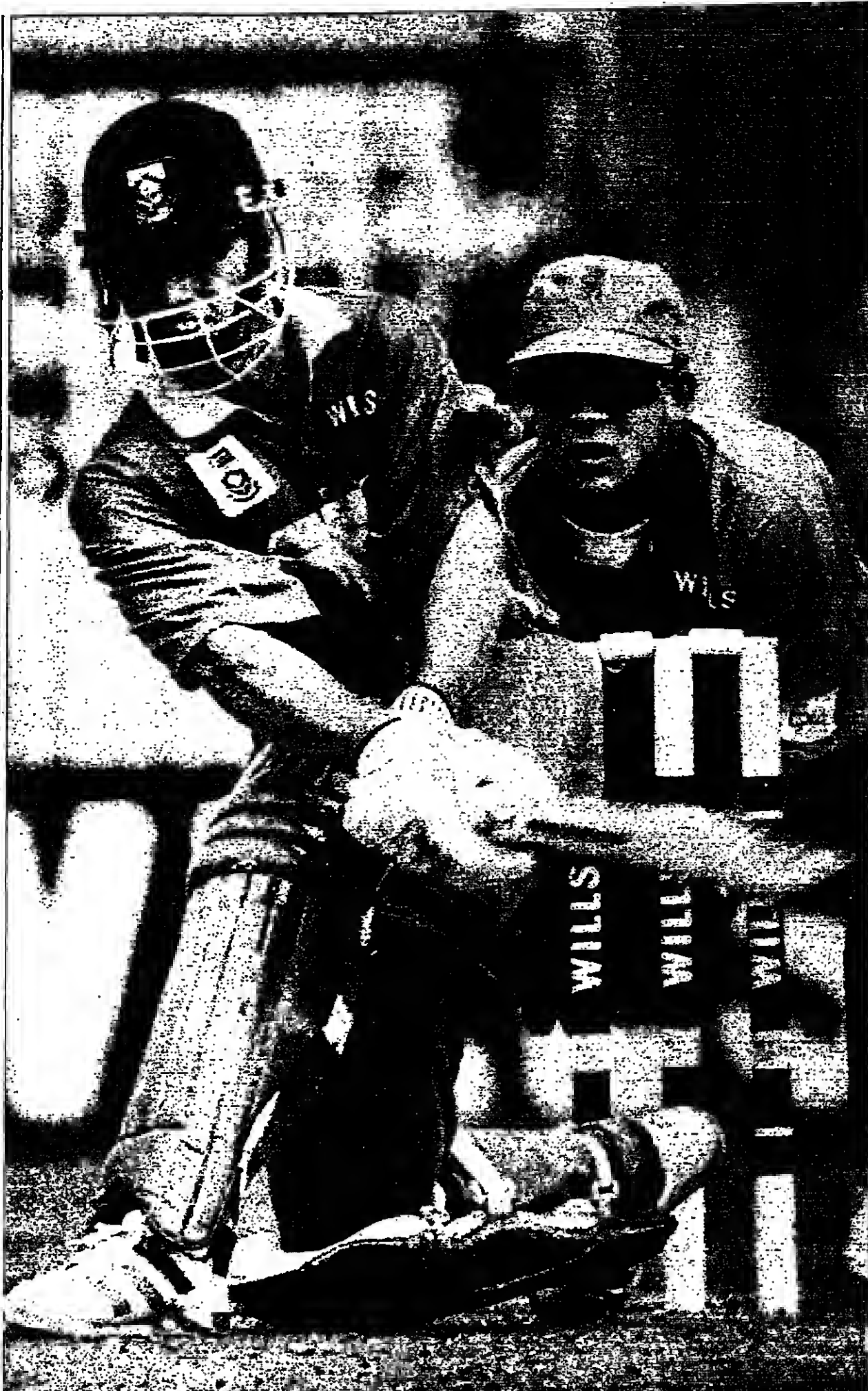
which a bicycle was thrown at a woman, may face charges.

The Aston Villa defender Ugo Ehiogu looks to have guaranteed his Coca-Cola Cup final place by his injury-time booking against Liverpool on Sunday. The referee Keith Cooper has confirmed his report will state that Ehiogu was cautioned "for a late tackle from behind".

That would mean a four-point penalty, which would take the centre-back to a one-match ban - the same fate as his team-mate Savo Milosevic, who was booked for kicking the ball away.

Leeds, Villa's Wembley opponents, are heading for a huge loss. At a meeting called to discuss the club's accounts - which showed a loss of £427,000 on the year to 31 May - the chairman Leslie Silver predicted a £3.5m loss on the current year.

Louie Donawa's £150,000 transfer from Birmingham to Swansea fell through yesterday after medical tests revealed a possible heart problem.



South Africa's Andrew Hudson sweeps to 161 against the Netherlands yesterday

Report, page 23; photograph, AP

Drivers praise new circuit

Motor racing

Environmentalists may have voiced their displeasure about it, but leading Formula One drivers are happy with Melbourne's re-developed Albert Park circuit, venue for opening grand prix of the new season.

Stirling Moss, who won the 1956 race there in a Maserati, praised its beauty. "It really is fantastic," he said. "It is the finest conventional road circuit I've seen, by miles. There is nothing else to compare with it."

Apart from its setting, there is little comparison between the circuit he won on and today's. After lying idle for 40 years, the 3.2-mile track, which has undergone £12.74m worth of redevelopment, is expected to be one of the fastest in the world, with average speeds of 125mph and top speeds over 185mph.

Michael Schumacher, the world champion who makes his first grand prix appearance for Ferrari in the race, considered it fast and exciting.

Jacques Villeneuve, the Canadian who won the IndyCar championship last season, said he had seen six potential overtaking places and praised the circuit for its high-speed nature and the challenge of its corners. "It looks great," said Villeneuve, who will be making his Formula One debut with the Williams team.

Villeneuve is intent on avoiding the fate suffered by Michael Andretti, one of his predecessors who made the switch from IndyCar to Formula One. Andretti, like Villeneuve, arrived in Formula One as the reigning IndyCar champion in 1993 but his reputation was in tatters as he retreated to the United States six months later having scored just one podium finish.

"I have spoken to Michael a lot since the end of last season," said Villeneuve, the new teammate of Damon Hill at Williams. "He was not very positive about his experience - understandably so. But our preparations for the season are much different. Michael came straight into a race situation and he was not based in Europe."

"Michael just did not have the time to get ready. I have already done several thousand miles of testing and have lived in Monaco for a few years now."

Nevertheless, he thought the season would be "a huge challenge."

Richardson will retire after World Cup

Cricket

TONY COZIER
reports from Bridgetown,
Barbados

Richie Richardson yesterday announced his retirement from international cricket by fax. The West Indies captain, who will step down after the World Cup, revealed his decision in a message from the team's hotel in Jaipur, India, to the Caribbean News Agency here.

"I had made up my mind at the end of the UK tour last summer that I would retire at the end of the World Cup," Richardson said. "I informed the West Indies Cricket Board of Control several days ago."

Demanded for some time by several influential former team-mates and a public anger by a string of embarrassing defeats, Richardson's decision accentuates the turmoil that has engulfed West Indies cricket in the past year.

As captain, Richardson has carried the brunt of the blame for

the series loss to Australia 10 months ago that ended the proud record of 15 years unbeaten in Test cricket. He has also been held partially responsible for the indiscipline that has undermined his team and the shabby displays that hit rock bottom with the World Cup defeat by Kenya.

If he had not jumped of his own accord, it was almost certain he would have been pushed by the West Indies Board of Control at its meeting in Antigua that coincided with his announcement.

If his departure as captain was not entirely unexpected, his decision to quit entirely leaves a huge vacuum in an already fragile middle order. As he showed with his match-winning unbeaten 93 against Australia on Monday, he remains capable of competing at the highest level. He is, after all, only 33.

His loss, following that of Desmond Haynes a year ago, leaves only Carl Hooper of the batsmen with over 50 Tests behind him. The pressure on the slender shoulders of Brian Lara will now be further heightened.

Even before the Kenyan fiasco, former players such as Jeffrey Dujon, Joel Garner and Carlisle Best had called for his removal as captain, and Viv Richards, his fellow Antiguan whom he succeeded in 1991, added his influential voice only a few days before the African fledglings inflicted their crushing upset.

Richardson's rift in England last summer with Lara complicated the captain's problems. Complaining that Richardson had been too soft on the trouble-makers in his ranks, Lara twice pulled out of the team in the space of six months. His reinstatement for the World Cup, with no preconditions, rankled with Richardson and was a powerful factor in his decision.

"Yet there is strong support to make Lara captain, a position for which he has been groomed since leading the West Indies Youth and 'A' teams in his formative years. But the likeliest scenario is that the veteran fast bowler Courtney Walsh will be recalled for the short term with Lara as vice-captain."

Cork injury scare for England

Dominic Cork has given England another injury scare four days before their World Cup quarter-final against Sri Lanka.

The Derbyshire all-rounder was taken to hospital in Karachi for a scan on his troublesome right knee after twisting it during fielding practice.

Detailed examination revealed no new damage, but Cork's fitness remains a worry for Saturday's match in Faisalabad.

"Dominic will have physiotherapy for the next 48 hours and hopefully will be available for selection for the quarter-final," the assistant manager, John Barclay, said.

Cork has been troubled, on and off, by a tendon problem for

most of this winter and is doing only a minimum amount of bowling in the nets between games.

England considered giving him a cortisone injection a couple of weeks ago but, after consultation with both the player and his county, decided that as much rest as possible between matches ought to keep him in action.

Cork experienced similar problems with the tendon just below his other knee two seasons ago and eventually needed an operation. That injury almost certainly delayed his arrival on the Test scene but, since then, he has been highly successful against West Indies last summer and in South Africa earlier this winter.

England regard Cork as a key member of their World Cup party. So far the results are not sparkling - eight wickets from five matches and a slightly disappointing economy rate of 4.5 runs per over - but they will be desperate to include him.

Derek Pringle, the Independent cricket writer and former England all-rounder, yesterday joined the small band of players who have hit six sixes in an over. Pringle compiled his perfect 36 playing for the English Press team against their Pakistani counterparts at the Karachi Gymkhana Ground. He scored 58 runs off just 15 deliveries as the visitors beat their hosts by 81 runs in a limited-overs match.

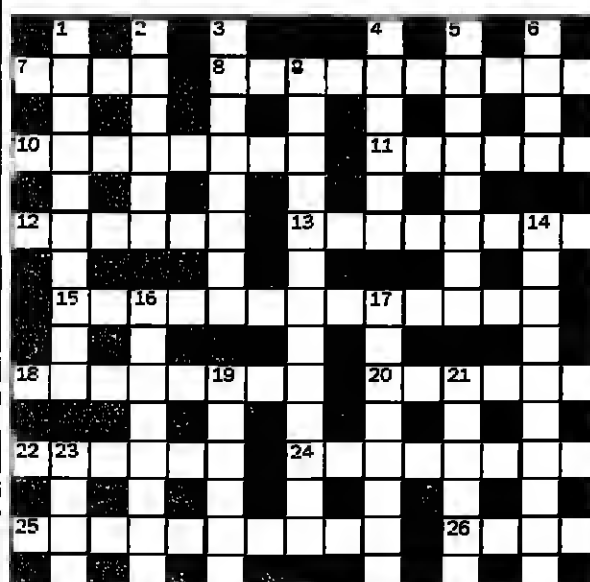
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD in association with



No. 2927, Wednesday 6 March

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



1 DOWN
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26 DOWN

ACROSS
7 Drink like a fish (4)
8 Tot up before moving off? (7-3)
10 Give new heart to popular character (8)
11 Golden-headed god, a creator (6)
12 Instruments for making glasses (6)
13 Ophidian from Canada? No, that can not be right! (8)
15 Cat left among Eliot's others, straying (13)
18 Eager for pain-killer at onset of gout (8)

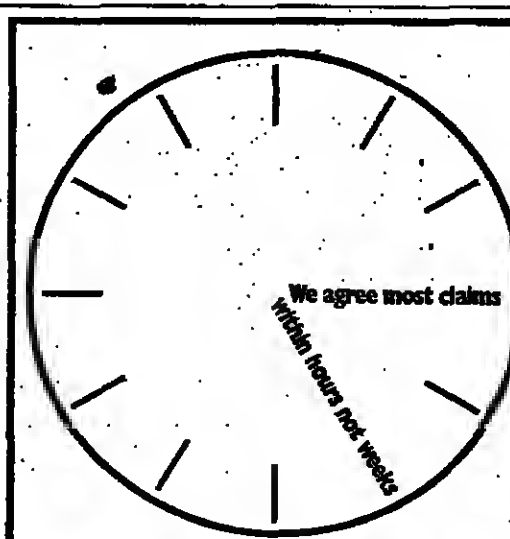
3 Stiff drink swallowed by Cimabue's press officer (8)
4 Philip's men defeated by England's slow bowler (6)
5 At university, oarsman shows rising mark on canvas (8)
6 Dicy way of getting men home? (4)
9 Such people do not yield when a tennis-string breaks (13)
14 Embassy striking out around Georgia (10)
16 To introduce second levy makes empire so unhappy (8)
17 The Admiralty, we hear, concerned with the coast? (8)
19 Character of O'Neill in office-management (6)
21 Small house in real development in city of Pakistan (6)
23 The Secret Life of Walter Mitty? (4)

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Published by Newspaper Publishing Plc, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford. Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 0800 906609. Wednesday 6 March 1996. Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office.



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